

CONTENT CODE FOR NATIONWIDE MANAGED TRANSMISSION LINEAR TELEVISION SERVICES

PREAMBLE

1. The Info-communications Media Development Authority ("the IMDA") is empowered to issue, and from time to time, review codes of practice relating to the standards of programmes and advertisements. Television and radio programmes, especially local productions, can exert a significant influence on the community. This Content Code for Nationwide Managed Transmission Linear Television Services ("the Code") seeks to ensure that programmes on such services offered by service providers licensed under the Broadcasting Act (Cap. 28) are not against public interest or order, or national harmony, or offend good taste and decency. The IMDA is also empowered under the Broadcasting Act (Cap. 28) to impose sanctions, including the imposition of financial penalties, on any service provider who contravenes the Code.

2. The Code outlines the general standards to be observed by licensed service providers¹ offering the following:

(a) Free-to-air Television ("FTA TV") Services; and

(b) Linear channels of Nationwide Subscription Cable and Internet Protocol Television ("Subscription TV") Services.

3. The provisions set out in this Code must be applied in spirit and read in conjunction with other relevant legislation, regulations, codes and/or licence conditions. The IMDA may require service providers to withdraw programmes that do not comply with this Code.

4. The Code deals in general principles and does not seek to address each and every possible case or scenario that could arise. Service providers may face cases or scenarios which are not specifically referred to or directly addressed in this Code. Examples included in the Code are not exhaustive. However, the principles and provisions in the following sections should make clear what the Code is designed to achieve and help service providers make the necessary judgments.

¹ This Code does not apply to Over-the-Top and Video-on-Demand services.

PART 1: CLASSIFICATION

1.1 To aid parental guidance and allow for informed viewing choice, all content must be rated according to the Film Classification Guidelines (appended in Annex A). The six ratings are as follows:

- G - General
- PG - Parental Guidance
- PG13 - Parental Guidance for Children below 13
- NC16 - No Children below 16 years of age
- M18 - Mature 18, for persons 18 years and above
- R21 - Restricted to persons 21 years and above

1.2 Any content disallowed or prohibited under the applicable laws, regulations, codes and/or licence conditions in Singapore must not be offered.

PART 2: SCHEDULING

FTA TV

- 2.1 All programmes broadcast between 6am and 10pm must be suitable for family audiences and hence not exceed the PG rating.
- 2.2 Programmes rated PG13 can only be broadcast between 10pm and 6am.
- 2.3 Programmes rated higher than PG13 are not allowed for broadcast.

Subscription TV

- 2.4 Service providers may offer content rated at NC16 or M18, only if parental locks are made available for their entire service.
- 2.5 Programmes rated M18 can only be broadcast between 10pm and 6am.
- 2.6 Programmes rated R21 are not allowed for broadcast.

PART 3: DISPLAY OF CLASSIFICATION RATING AND CONSUMER ADVICE

FTA TV

- 3.1 For programmes rated PG and PG13:
- (a) The classification rating must be displayed before the start of the programme;

- (b) The consumer advice describing the main elements² which have contributed to the rating:
 - (i) must be displayed before the start of programmes rated PG13;
 - (ii) should be displayed before the start of programmes rated PG, where applicable; and
 - (iii) should be clearly worded and displayed in a legible typeface that should remain visible for at least 5 seconds;
- (c) The classification rating should be displayed alongside the title in the electronic programme guide, where applicable; and
- (d) Classification information should be superimposed at the top left-hand corner of the screen at the beginning of the programme and after every commercial break for one minute.

Subscription TV

3.2 For programmes rated PG13 and above:

- (a) The classification rating should be displayed before the start of the programme;
- (b) The consumer advice describing the main elements which have contributed to the rating:
 - (i) should be displayed before the start of the programme; and
 - (ii) should be clearly worded and displayed in a legible typeface that should remain visible for at least 5 seconds; and
- (c) The classification rating should be displayed alongside the title in the electronic programme guide, particularly for programmes rated NC16 and M18.

PART 4: CONTENT ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- 4.1 Advertisements of services and programmes by service providers on TV and radio must comply with the relevant content codes.
- 4.2 Service providers are encouraged to include the relevant classification rating and consumer advice for programmes rated PG and higher in print and online promotional and publicity materials, e.g. TV guides in print or programme

² This includes the intensity and/or frequency of the elements, e.g. "Due to strong violence and frequent horror scenes, parental guidance is advised."

listings on websites. Some examples are: PG13 (Violence), NC16 (Sexual References), M18 (Mature Themes).

PART 5: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

National and Public Interest

5.1 Programmes must:

- (a) comply with the prevailing laws of Singapore;
- (b) not undermine national interest, national security, public interest, public security or public order;
- (c) not be detrimental to Singapore's relationship with other countries; and
- (d) not contain extremist or anarchic messages, such as advocating or promoting the use of violence.

5.2 Service providers must ensure that due impartiality is observed in programmes dealing with matters of public policy or controversial issues of public importance in Singapore. Due impartiality requires programme producers to deal even-handedly when opposing points of view are presented in a programme. On matters of public importance, balance should be sought through the presentation, as far as possible, of principal relevant viewpoints. Programmes should not be slanted by the exclusion of facts or by misleading emphasis. Every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that the factual content of programmes is accurate.

Racial and Religious Harmony

5.3 For the purposes of this Code, race includes dialect groups and ethnic groups.

5.4 Service providers should bear in mind Singapore's multi-racial and multi-religious context. They should exercise due caution and discretion when featuring the activities, beliefs, practices, or views of any racial or religious group. In featuring any religious belief or view, service providers should ensure these do not disparage or cast other religious faiths in poor light.

5.5 Programmes must:

- (a) be kept secular and not be of a proselytic nature;
- (b) present references to race and religion accurately and in a dignified and sensitive manner;

- (c) not denigrate or be likely to offend the sensitivities of any racial or religious group; and
- (d) not incite or be likely to incite racial and/or religious intolerance or misunderstanding.

5.6 Racial and religious stereotyping should be avoided.

Social Norms and Values

5.7 Service providers should bear in mind the importance of the family as the basic unit of society. The institution of marriage should be respected.

5.8 Programmes should not:

- (a) make references to any class or group of persons as being innately or inherently inferior; and
- (b) encourage or in any way lead to discrimination against any section of the community on account of race, religion, gender, age, occupational status or disability.

5.9 Harmful behaviours such as smoking, alcoholism and self-harm should not be presented as glamorous or desirable, especially in local programmes.

5.10 Service providers should be mindful of social and cultural sensitivities. For instance, kissing in Malay programmes should be avoided.

5.11 Service providers should exercise sensitivity regarding humour that may offend good taste and decency, e.g. jokes based on negative stereotyping or caricatures in relation to race, religion, gender, age or disability, which can cause hurt or humiliation.

5.12 Programmes involving children (e.g. talent contests for children) should not be exploitative or distasteful.

PART 6: GAMBLING, CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Gambling

6.1 Service providers should be mindful of the potential cumulative effect of programmes normalising gambling, crime and anti-social behaviour. No programme should encourage or promote gambling even with regard to legalised forms of gambling.

6.2 Programmes depicting gambling or the use of gambling devices should be presented with discretion and in a manner that does not encourage viewers to gamble.

6.3 The broadcast of all forms of gambling tips is strictly prohibited.

Crime

6.4 Service providers must not broadcast any information from any source which could endanger lives or prejudice the success of attempts to deal with any crime or emergency.

6.5 For FTA TV programmes dealing with criminal activities, service providers should exercise discretion and, where appropriate, seek advice from the police, before information is given about law-breaking, or methods to counter law enforcement or other security measures.

Anti-Social Behaviour

6.6 FTA TV programmes should not:

(a) Glorify gangs and secret societies; and

(b) Glamorise or present in a favourable light hooliganism, vandalism, juvenile delinquency and other anti-social behaviour.

Supernatural, Fortune Telling and Other Beliefs

6.7 Belief in superstition and the worship of the occult should not be promoted.

6.8 Programmes exploring occult or other 'psychic' phenomena, particularly those with actual demonstrations of exorcisms or occult practices should be treated with caution.

6.9 For FTA TV, programmes of such nature should be scheduled after 10pm, especially in instances where the treatment or presentation of such themes is dark and frightening for children.

6.10 Programmes based on or dealing with fortune-telling, fengshui, palmreading, numerology, mind-reading, tarot reading, astrology, new age healing and the like should not give the impression that these practices are exact sciences.

PART 7: CLASSIFIABLE CONTENT ELEMENTS

7.1 The major content concerns addressed in this Code are as follows:

- Theme
- Violence
- Nudity
- Sex
- Coarse Language
- Drug Use
- Horror

7.2 The different degrees to which each content concern can be allowed at the various classification levels are spelt out in detail in the IMDA's Film Classification Guidelines (appended in Annex A). These Guidelines serve as a basis for classifying programmes and should be read in conjunction with all the other provisions set out in this Code.³

Coarse Language

7.3 For FTA TV, obscene or offensive jokes, words, gestures, songs, dialogues and subtitles should not be broadcast.

PART 8: ADDITIONAL CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 When considering the suitability of a programme for broadcast, other factors apart from the classifiable content concerns would also need to be taken into account.

Language Standards and Requirements

8.2 Programmes should maintain high standards of language and speech in the four official languages of Singapore.

8.3 Standard English, which is grammatically correct, should be used for locally produced programmes such as news, info-educational programmes and children's programmes. Local English, which is also grammatically correct but pronounced with a Singaporean accent and which may include local terms and expressions, can be used for programmes like dramas, comedies and variety shows. In interviews where the interviewee speaks only Singlish⁴, Singlish can be allowed. The interviewer himself, however, should not use Singlish.

³ Provisions in the Film Classification Guidelines relating to Trailers and Publicity Materials are not applicable to licensed service providers subject to this Code.

⁴ Singlish refers to ungrammatical local English, and includes dialect terms and sentence structures based on dialect.

- 8.4 All content on Chinese services must be in Mandarin, except for the allowances as set out in Clauses 8.6 and 8.7 or where it is specifically approved by the Authority. Dialect may also be allowed provided the context justifies usage and is sparingly used.
- 8.5 For FTA TV, sub-standard Mandarin (characterised by poor syntax or use of vocabulary, or poorly pronounced Mandarin) should not be used for locally produced Chinese programmes such as news, info-educational programmes and children's programmes.
- 8.6 For all Chinese services, allowances for dialect content are as follows:
- (a) Operatic performances;
 - (b) News, current affairs and info-educational programmes, where older people or foreigners respond to interviews in dialect. Subtitles or voice-overs should be provided for these interviews;
 - (c) Dialect terms where the Mandarin equivalents may not be easily understood or commonly used, such as 'ang ku kueh' and 'kopi gao'; and
 - (d) Dialect theme songs played during the opening or closing programme credits of acquired Chinese dramas.
- 8.7 For Chinese services on Subscription TV services, additional allowances for dialect content are as follows:
- (a) One dialect art-house movie per week per Chinese channel or service; and
 - (b) In every clock hour, up to 30% of songs or music videos broadcast on a music channel may be in dialect.
- 8.8 Dialect in English programmes may be allowed provided the context justifies usage and is sparingly used, or specifically approved by the Authority. Allowances in Clauses 8.6 (b) and (c) also apply.
- 8.9 The use of Bahasa Melayu Baku (standard pronunciation of Malay) is encouraged for all Malay programmes, particularly news, info-educational and current affairs programmes. Specifically:
- (a) Local Malay news, info-educational and current affairs programmes must be in Bahasa Melayu Baku.
 - (b) Foreign or acquired programmes that require dubbing should be in Bahasa Melayu Baku. However, acquired programmes that are already in Malay need not be re-dubbed into Bahasa Melayu Baku.
- 8.10 Standard Tamil, which refers to accurate grammar use, pronunciation and intonation, should be used for locally produced Tamil programmes such as

news, current affairs and info-educational programmes. Flexibility can be accorded in instances where the interviewee is not fluent in Tamil. The interviewer, however, should still use standard Tamil. Conversational Tamil, which refers to the use of local terms and expressions in Tamil, may be used in entertainment programmes like dramas, comedies and variety shows.

Children's Programmes

- 8.11 For the purpose of this section, "children" refers to persons below the age of 14 years.
- 8.12 Children may not be able to distinguish real life from fiction and are likely to be disturbed by realistic portrayals of violence, horror, etc. Thus, children's content should not be presented in a manner which may be disturbing or distressing to children, or which may in any way adversely affect their general well-being.
- 8.13 Children's programmes should generally be wholesome and designed to impart a broader knowledge of the world around them, and to promote good social and moral values, and respect for law and order.
- 8.14 Children's programmes must not contain scenes depicting the consumption of liquor or tobacco products unless an educational point is being made, or in very exceptional cases if there is strong editorial justification.
- 8.15 Coarse language must not be used in children's programmes.
- 8.16 Children's programmes should avoid portrayals of dangerous and harmful behaviour that are easily imitated by children in a manner that is likely to result in physical or mental harm.
- 8.17 Programmes for younger children require special care as they may find violence and horror scenes or programmes in both realistic and fantasy settings to be disturbing. For programmes which may be frightening to pre-school children, service providers should provide an advisory to alert parents.

News and Other Factual Programmes

- 8.18 Significant errors in factual programmes such as news, current affairs and info-educational programmes should be corrected and made available at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.19 News and other factual programmes, such as current affairs and info-educational programmes, that contain violent or graphic real-life visuals should carry consumer advice to alert viewers.
- 8.20 The Government or its agencies are to be granted, as soon as practicable, a right of reply or an opportunity to respond to correct mistakes, wrongful reporting or misrepresentations. For private individuals or groups, an

opportunity to respond should be considered based on the merits of each case. The IMDA may direct a service provider to give an aggrieved party the opportunity to respond over an appropriate medium.

8.21 Presentation of news on FTA TV must observe the following additional guidelines:

- (a) News reports and bulletins should always be presented with due accuracy and impartiality, and without the interjection of personal views by presenters.
- (b) News reports and bulletins should be clearly distinguished from other programmes.
- (c) Morbid, sensational, or alarming details not essential to factual reporting should be excluded.
- (d) Particular care must be taken when reporting on sexual crimes. Reports must not carry information which could lead to the identification of such victims.
- (e) News reports must be sensitive to the use of materials or information relating to a person's personal or private affairs. The broadcast of such materials or information is acceptable only if there is an identifiable public interest for doing so.
- (f) Visuals that may seriously distress or offend should only be displayed when there is an identifiable public interest for doing so. Such visuals should be suitably edited and carry consumer advice to alert viewers. Sensitivity must be exercised in broadcasting visuals of or interviews with bereaved relatives or survivors and witnesses of traumatic incidents.
- (g) Sexual or other sensational material should not be exploited as news items without justification.

8.22 Any simulation of a television news bulletin or news flash to be included in any FTA TV programme should be clearly distinguishable from an actual news bulletin.

8.23 Opinion should be clearly distinguished from fact in all factual FTA TV programmes. Personal view programmes in which an individual is given the opportunity to put forward his or her own views, without necessarily referring to opposing views, are subject to the following guidelines:

- (a) The programme must be clearly identified as one which contains personal opinions or views, both in advance announcements and at the start of the programme.
- (b) Acknowledged or undisputed facts must be respected, and service providers have an obligation to do what they can to ensure that the

opinions expressed, however partial, do not rest upon false or inaccurate facts.

- 8.24 Dramatised “reconstructions” in factual FTA TV programmes that seek to reconstruct actual events should not distort key facts. Such dramatised reconstructions should also be identified clearly to the viewer.

Privacy

- 8.25 Programmes should be sensitive to the use of materials or information relating to a person's personal or private affairs.
- 8.26 Special care should be exercised before using material relating to a child's personal or private affairs in programmes. Consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian before naming or visually identifying a child on a criminal matter or disclosing sensitive information concerning the health or welfare of a child.
- 8.27 Sensitivity should be exercised in broadcasting images of or interviews with bereaved relatives or survivors and witnesses of traumatic incidents. Images that may seriously distress or offend should only be displayed when there is identifiable public interest for doing so and be suitably edited.

Stimuli Beyond Normal Perceptual Threshold

Subliminal Messaging

- 8.28 Programmes with subliminal messaging, which is the use of images, sounds or any other devices or means to convey messages or influence the minds of audiences without their being aware of it, are not allowed.

Flashing Images and Regular Patterns

- 8.29 Flashing lights and certain types of regular visual patterns may cause problems for some viewers suffering from photosensitive epilepsy or other related conditions. Care should be taken to minimise these risks in all programmes, especially programmes where children are likely to be watching as they could be more susceptible.

Hypnotism

- 8.30 For any broadcast demonstration of hypnotism for entertainment, care should be taken to minimise the risk of hypnosis being induced in susceptible viewers.

PART 9: INTERACTIVE SERVICES

Contests and Chargeable Services

- 9.1 If, during a programme or programme promotion, viewers are invited to use a chargeable service to obtain information, register a view on a matter or participate in a competition or other activity, the service provider must provide clear information about the cost of the service and charging mechanisms. If the programme is one that can have a substantial audience of children, the programme must present information on the cost of the service and charging mechanisms in a form that children can understand. Such programmes must also make it clear to children that they should obtain their parents' permission to use such services.

“Live” and Interactive Content

- 9.2 Programmes that feature viewers' comments submitted through messaging services, online platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) and otherwise are subject to the guidelines in this Code.
- 9.3 For FTA TV, all comments should be screened and moderated before broadcast. For Subscription TV, all comments should be screened and moderated to the best of the service providers' ability. Offensive content should be removed immediately upon detection or knowledge.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

This Code shall come into effect on 1 March 2018 and replaces the Free-to-air Television Programme Code that took effect on 24 June 2013 and the Subscription TV Programme Code that took effect on 20 December 2012. The IMDA may from time to time revise or update the Code to maintain accuracy.

- END -

**INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FILM CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES**

Preamble

1. The Guidelines sets out the general principles and content concerns that the IMDA considers in its classification process and aims to reflect community standards⁵. The classification ratings and considerations for deriving them are also applicable for licensed service providers offering the following:

- i. Free-to-air Television Services;
- ii. Linear channels of Nationwide Subscription Cable and Internet Protocol Television Services;
- iii. Over-the-Top Services;
- iv. Video-on-Demand Services; and
- v. Niche Services.

2. The provisions set out in the Guidelines have to be applied in spirit and should be read in conjunction with other relevant legislation, regulations, codes and/or licence conditions. Examples included in the Guidelines are not exhaustive.

Classification Ratings

3. The purpose of classification is to protect the young from mature content while allowing more viewing choices for adults.

4. There are six classification ratings. They are:



General - Suitable for persons of all ages



Parental Guidance - Suitable for persons of all ages but parental guidance is recommended for younger viewers



Parental Guidance for Children below 13 - Suitable for persons aged 13 and above but parental guidance is advised for children below 13



No Children below 16 years of age - Restricted to persons aged 16 and above



Mature 18 - Restricted to persons aged 18 and above



Restricted 21 – Restricted to persons aged 21 and above

⁵ Community standards refer to the community's views on acceptable content derived through consultations or surveys.

5. G, PG and PG13 are advisory ratings, while NC16, M18 and R21 are age-restricted ratings enforceable by law. In exceptional cases, a film may be refused classification if the content: undermines public order or is likely to be prejudicial to national interest; denigrates any racial or religious community; promotes feelings of ill-will or hostility between different racial or religious groups; and so on. Please refer to the section at the end of this document for more details on content that will be refused classification.

6. Film exhibitors and distributors are required to obtain the relevant licences to exhibit or distribute films. Exhibitors and distributors must enforce the relevant age restrictions and adhere to the licensing conditions, as well as any additional classification conditions imposed by the IMDA.

General Principles and Considerations

7. In general, the IMDA's classification decisions are guided by the following principles and considerations:

a. Generally Accepted Social Norms and Values

Classification should be sensitive to social norms and values that are generally acceptable to members of the public.

b. Need to Protect the Young

For the lower ratings, particular attention should be paid to content that may be harmful or unsuitable for the young, such as depictions of potentially dangerous imitable behaviour.

c. Racial/Religious Harmony

Classification should be sensitive to the concerns of different racial or religious groups and the need to safeguard racial and religious harmony. Mild racial or religious stereotyping may be classified at a lower rating while stronger depictions will require a higher rating. Films that present a skewed perspective of any race or religion are likely to be given a higher or restricted rating as greater maturity is required to discern such content. Films that are likely to denigrate any racial or religious group, or promote feelings of ill-will or hostility between different racial or religious groups will be refused classification.

d. Public Order and National Interest

Films deemed to undermine public order, or is likely to be prejudicial to national interest will be refused classification.

8. When classifying a film, the IMDA considers the film's theme, the presentation of content, and the context in which scenes are presented, as well as the film's artistic or educational merit.

9. A film or a scene is evaluated based on the presentation, duration, frequency, degree of visual and audio details, and their cumulative effect. In classifying (or refusing classification of) any material, due regard will be given (as appropriate) to all of the following:
- (a) the detail contained in a depiction, portrayal or an image, or a dialogue, reference or commentary, including the use of close-ups and slow motion;
 - (b) the use of special effects, such as lighting and sound, resolution, colour, size of images, characterisation and tone;
 - (c) the realism of any depiction, portrayal, image, dialogue, reference or commentary;
 - (d) whether the matter has greater cultural or political significance or is of particular public controversy in Singapore at the time of classification or reclassification;
 - (e) whether accentuation techniques are used, such as lighting, perspective and resolution;
 - (f) whether the depiction, portrayal or an image, or dialogue, reference or commentary, is prolonged or repeated frequently;
 - (g) whether the material encourages interactivity; and
 - (h) whether the material is visual or verbal.

Content Concerns

10. The IMDA's assessment of a film includes the following seven content elements:

a. Theme and Message

Classification must take into account the treatment of theme(s) and message(s) in a film. For the advisory ratings, theme(s) and message(s) should be presented and treated sensitively due to the potential impact on the young. Films that center on mature theme(s) or content would generally be classified NC16, M18 or R21. Films that contain distorted or misrepresented discussions or depictions of a subject matter (including historical events), may be classified at a higher rating or refused classification.

b. Violence

The degree and nature of violence in a film will impact the classification rating. Depictions of violence may frighten, unsettle or invite imitation, especially from children. Therefore, only mild depictions of violence may be allowed in films meant for children. For the higher ratings, stronger depictions of violence are permitted. However, films that contain detailed or gratuitous depictions of extreme violence or cruelty; detailed instructions on methods of crime or killings; or excessive or exploitative depictions of sexual violence will be refused classification.

c. Nudity

The extent and context of depictions of nudity are classification considerations. There should be no nudity at a G rating. At a PG or PG13 rating, depictions of rear or side profile nudity in a non-sexual context may be presented. There can be exceptions for films which feature infrequent and non-sexual depictions of female upper body nudity at a PG13 rating, e.g. films containing footage of historical events, tribal ways of life, or medical/health programmes. Upper body frontal nudity in a non-sexual context is allowed under NC16. Depictions of full frontal nudity may be featured at M18 or R21. Exploitative depictions of nudity will be refused classification.

d. Sex

Classification of depictions of sexual activity in films depends on its explicitness, frequency, and relevance to the storyline. Generally, there should be no depictions of sexual activity at the G and PG ratings.

Films that depict alternative sexualities, e.g. homosexuality, should be sensitive to community values. Films that centre on alternative sexualities may be classified at highest rating of R21. Non-explicit depictions of sexual activity between persons of the same gender may be featured at R21 rating.

Films containing depictions of sexual activities such as sadomasochism, bondage, orgies or sexual violence will be subject to strict review and may only be allowed at the higher ratings, depending on the treatment and context.

Films containing explicit depictions of deviant sexual activities (e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia) or exploitative depictions of sexual activities will be refused classification.

e. Language

The classification of coarse language depends on the strength of the language, the context in which it is used, as well as community and cultural sensitivities associated with its usage.

Coarse language, rude gestures, and gestures with sexual connotations must not be featured in G films as they are easily imitated by young children. In PG13 films, there may be infrequent use of expletives such as 'f**k'.

Stronger language is acceptable at higher ratings, with due consideration given to the degree of offensiveness and frequency of usage. This includes coarse language that offends community and cultural sensitivities.

Chinese films meant for theatrical release should generally be in Mandarin, in line with the Speak Mandarin Campaign. Films with dialect content are allowed on a case-by-case basis.

f. Drug and Substance Abuse (including Psychoactive Substance Abuse)

Films rated G should have no references to or depictions of drug and substance abuse. Films rated PG and PG13 may only feature infrequent or discreet references or depictions of drug and substance abuse, as these may have a negative influence on the young. Depictions of drug and substance abuse may be featured at NC16, M18 or R21, depending on the frequency and level of details. Films with content that promote drug or psychoactive substance abuse, or includes detailed and instructive depictions of drug or psychoactive substance abuse will be refused classification.

g. Horror

In classifying films containing horrific or disturbing content, the IMDA will take into consideration the impact of such depictions to ensure that young audiences are protected.

Consumer Advice

11. After a film is classified, an appropriate consumer advice may be given to highlight the stronger content elements within the film. This is to ensure that viewers have the necessary information to make informed choices. It also serves as a guide for parents to decide on the suitability of a film for their children. Films classified G do not require consumer advice. Films classified PG may be accompanied by consumer advice where appropriate. Films rated PG13, NC16, M18 and R21 must carry consumer advice.

12. The classification rating and consumer advice must be clearly visible and legible in advertisements, trailers, and points of ticket sales or distribution.

Trailers

13. Trailers of films are assessed and classified in the same manner as films. For trailers, intense scenes may be concentrated within a shorter duration of time. In such cases, the impact may be heightened, hence the trailer may be given a higher rating than the film.

14. Trailers can only be shown prior to films of a similar or higher rating. For example, a PG-rated trailer cannot be screened before a G-rated film.

15. Trailers rated PG13 and above must not be screened in public places, such as video walls, where there may be inadvertent exposure to young audiences.

16. Trailers of R21-rated films can only be shown before R21-rated films.

17. Film exhibitors and distributors must also observe any conditions imposed by the IMDA on the screening of the trailers.

Advertisements

18. Advertisements are typically displayed in locations accessible to the general public, including young children. To minimise discomfort to unsolicited viewers and protect the young, strict content standards are applied to advertisements. Extra care should be exercised in determining the display location of advertisements containing horrific or disturbing content.

19. Once a film is classified, advertisements should display the rating and consumer advice clearly. The display of advertisements for R21 films should be restricted to venues licensed to exhibit R21 films. For more information, please refer to the “Guidelines on Promotional Materials for Films” available on the IMDA website.

Exemptible Content

20. Specific types of films, such as children’s programmes or recordings of arts and cultural performances, are exempted from classification. The exemption applies only to films that fall within the pre-defined categories and does not include any material that is listed as ‘non-exemptible’. For more information, please refer to the “Films Exemption Guidelines and Categories” available on the IMDA website.

Periodic Review and Implementation of Guidelines

21. The Film Classification Guidelines shall come into effect on 29 April 2019 and it replaces the version that took effect from 15 July 2011. The IMDA may from time to time revise or update the Film Classification Guidelines to ensure that it is in line with community standards and social norms.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Act of intimacy:	A physical expression of romantic or sexual attraction, usually in the form of sensual touching.
Alternative Sexualities:	Sexual identities or preferences that stand in contrast to the social norm of heterosexuality.
Coarse language:	Foul, crude or offensive language. Strong coarse language includes terms such as “motherfucker”, “cunt” etc, while stronger terms are culturally offensive expletives such as “kan ni lao bu”.
Dark themes:	Issues or topics that tend to be grim, depressing, macabre or dismal.
Denigrate:	To belittle, sully or negatively distort the character of a person, race, or religion.
Depiction:	Representation or portrayal on screen.
Detail:	The amount of audio or visual information in the representation of a subject, including close-ups, repeated, prolonged or slow motion visuals.
Deviant sexual activities:	Sexual behaviour or activities that are not considered socially acceptable by reasonable members of the public. Non-exhaustive examples include paedophilia, bestiality, and necrophilia.
Discreet:	Subtle, non-explicit visual cues or verbal references that are lacking in details.
Disturbing:	Upsetting or troubling.
Drug/ Psychoactive Substance Abuse:	Improper or excessive use of drugs or psychoactive substances. Psychoactive substance means any opiod, cannaboid, sedative, hypnotic, cocaine, other psychostimulant, hallucinogen or volatile solvent, but excludes alcohol, coffee and tobacco.
Excessive:	Beyond reasonable limits, especially in terms of detail, duration or frequency.

Expletive:	An exclamatory word or phrase that is obscene, rude or offensive.
Explicit	Language or depiction with strong details, in relation to nudity, sex and violence.
Exploitative:	Taking advantage of or abusing the situation, for sensationalism; lacking moral, artistic, or other values.
Fetish:	A form of sexual desire where gratification is derived from atypical means, such as from an object or a specific behaviour.
Gratuitous:	Unwarranted or uncalled for, and included without the justification of either a defensible story-line or artistic merit.
Horror:	A strong feeling of fear or distress caused by depictions that are frightful and shocking.
Mature themes:	Issues typically pertaining to adult life, including adultery, alternative sexualities, gender identities, promiscuity, suicide, drug/substance abuse, etc.
Moderate:	Depiction that features some details and may have some impact that is within reasonable limits.
Offensive:	Material that causes outrage or disgust to reasonable members of the public.
Sexual activity:	An act performed for sexual gratification. May include foreplay.
Sexual violence:	The act of sexual assault or aggression, which the victim does not consent to.
Strong:	Detailed depiction that is likely to have a high impact on viewers.
Theme:	A concept or subject matter that is portrayed or explored within the film.
Tone:	The quality of mood, such as sadness, humour, menace, lightness, or seriousness.
Treatment:	The way in which material is handled or presented.

CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS

How a film is rated depends on its theme and the frequency and intensity of the classifiable elements including theme, horror, language, nudity, sex, drug and substance abuse, and violence.

Theme

Rating	Guidelines
G	Themes should be suitable for viewers of all ages, including young children, and generally promote positive social values, e.g. family bonding, respect for elders.
PG	Themes should generally have a low sense of threat and be suitable for children aged below 13 years.
PG13	Themes should be suitable for teenagers aged 13 years and above. Dark themes such as horror or child abuse should be treated with discretion.
NC16	Mature themes that are appropriate for viewers aged 16 years and above. Themes such as self-harm or euthanasia should be treated with discretion.
M18	Stronger portrayal and exploration of mature themes. Homosexual theme or content as a sub-plot, if discreet in treatment and not gratuitous.
R21	Stronger and more explicit portrayal and exploration of mature themes. Films that portray, as a main theme, same-sex marriage or parenting will be subject to strict review.

Violence

Rating	Guidelines
G	<p>Depictions of violence should be mild, with occasional mild threat.</p> <p>No depictions of dangerous or harmful behaviour that could be imitated by children.</p>
PG	<p>Depictions of violence without details.</p> <p>Depictions of violence should not dwell on cruelty, infliction of pain or torture.</p>
PG13	<p>Depictions of violence with some details.</p> <p>Depictions of violence can include some infliction of pain and injury but should not be detailed or prolonged.</p>
NC16	<p>Depictions of violence and gore with moderate details.</p> <p>Depictions of torture with some details should be infrequent and brief.</p> <p>Brief, infrequent and non-detailed depictions of sexual violence.</p>
M18	<p>Depictions of violence and gore with strong details.</p> <p>Infrequent depictions of torture with strong details.</p> <p>Non-explicit depictions of sexual violence.</p>
R21	<p>Frequent depictions of violence and gore with strong details.</p> <p>Depictions of torture with strong details, if not exploitative or gratuitous.</p> <p>Non-excessive depictions of sexual violence.</p>

Sex

Rating	Guidelines
G	Brief displays of affection (e.g. brief kissing).
PG	Displays of affection (e.g. kissing and caressing). Brief, infrequent and discreet references to sexual activity. Brief, infrequent and mild sexual innuendoes.
PG13	Brief, infrequent and discreet depictions of sexual activity. Infrequent and non-detailed use of sexual humour or sexual innuendoes, including crude hand gestures and sexual imagery.
NC16	Non-detailed and non-prolonged depictions of sexual activity.
M18	Depictions of sexual activity without strong details. Non-explicit depictions of mild sexual activity or acts of intimacy (e.g. kissing and hugging) between persons of the same gender.
R21	Non-excessive and non-exploitative depictions of sexual activities. Non-explicit depictions of sexual activities between persons of the same gender. Depictions of sexual activities such as sadomasochism, bondage or orgies will be subject to strict review.

Nudity

Rating	Guidelines
G	There should be no depictions of nudity.
PG	Brief or discreet depictions of full rear nudity in a non-sexual context.
PG13	<p>Brief or discreet depictions of side profile nudity in a non-sexual context.</p> <p>Infrequent or brief depictions of female upper body nudity in a non-sexual context under exceptional circumstances, e.g. historical or dramatised events such as wars, genocides, tribal ways of life, or medical/health programmes.</p>
NC16	Infrequent, brief and discreet depictions of female upper body nudity in a non-sexual context.
M18	Full frontal nudity with moderate detail (eg. without close-up of genitalia) is acceptable, if justified by context, and not excessive.
R21	Non-exploitative and non-excessive depictions of full frontal nudity.

Language

Rating	Guidelines
G	There should be no use of coarse language.
PG	Use of mild coarse language such as “shit”, “bitch” and “asshole”.
PG13	Infrequent use of coarse language such as the expletive “fuck”.
NC16	Infrequent use of strong coarse language, such as the expletives “motherfucker”, “cunt”, “chee bye”, “lan jiao”, “puki mak” and “pundai”.
M18	Frequent use of strong coarse language such as the expletives “fuck” and “motherfucker”. Infrequent use of very strong coarse language, such as “kan ni lao bu chee bye”.
R21	Frequent use of very strong coarse language.

Drug and Substance Abuse (Including Psychoactive Substance Abuse)

Rating	Guidelines
G	There should not be any reference to or depiction of drug and psychoactive substance abuse. Consumption of alcohol or tobacco products should not be promoted.
PG	Discreet references to drug and psychoactive substance abuse.
PG13	Brief, infrequent and discreet depictions of drug and psychoactive substance abuse.
NC16	Infrequent and brief depictions of drug and psychoactive substance abuse with moderate details.
M18	Infrequent depictions of drug and psychoactive substance abuse with strong details.
R21	Frequent depictions of drug and psychoactive substance abuse with strong details.

Horror

Rating	Guidelines
G	Brief and infrequent depictions of horror without any sense of threat, e.g. tinged with humour.
PG	Brief or infrequent depictions of horror with a mild sense of threat.
PG13	Depictions of horror with a moderate sense of threat. Infrequent and non-detailed depictions of disturbing scenes.
NC16	Depictions of horror with a sustained sense of threat. Detailed depictions of disturbing scenes should be brief or infrequent.
M18	Strong depictions of horror with sustained sense of threat. Frequent, detailed depictions of disturbing scenes.
R21	Depictions of extreme abhorrent activity (e.g. explicit depictions of cannibalism) that may cause great discomfort should be infrequent or brief.

REFUSED CLASSIFICATION MATERIAL

- I. The following material (whether a depiction, portrayal or an image, or a dialogue, reference or commentary) are prescribed as materials that would be refused classification, for the purposes of section 16(1)(e) of the Films Act:
- a. any material that undermines or is likely to undermine public order, or is likely to be prejudicial to national interest;
 - b. any material that promotes or is likely to promote feelings of ill-will or hostility between different racial or religious groups in Singapore or is denigrating any racial or religious community;
 - c. any material that is likely to cause feelings of enmity, hatred, or hostility between different communities in Singapore;
 - d. any material that is about or promotes
 - i. deviant sexual behaviour; or

Examples

- Depictions of practices such as bestiality or necrophilia.
- Depictions of or provision of instruction in paedophile activity.
- Depictions of activity accompanied by fetishes, group sex or practices which are offensive or abhorrent.

- ii. sexual behaviour that does not reflect current community attitudes and values in Singapore

Examples

- The promotion of homosexuality
- Excessive depictions of sexual activity between individuals of the same gender

- e. any material containing —
 - Detailed or gratuitous depictions of extreme violence or cruelty;
 - Detailed instructions on methods of crime or killings; or
 - Excessive or exploitative depictions of sexual violence;
- f. any material that includes exploitative depictions of sexual activity;
- g. any material that includes exploitative nudity;
- h. any material that promotes drug or psychoactive substance abuse, or includes detailed and instructive depictions of drug or psychoactive substance abuse.

- II. For the purpose of determining the impact of the above content such that they are to be refused classification, regard must be given to (as appropriate) the matters as set out in Para 9 under “General Principles and Considerations” of this document.