

# ADVERTISING AND MARKETING GUIDELINES FOR IARC-RATED GAMES



For the benefit of consumers, IARC encourages the display of rating information in a game's advertising and marketing materials as outlined below.

## 1. RATING ICONS, CONTENT DESCRIPTORS, AND INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- **Rating categories** indicate the age-appropriateness of a game.
- **Content descriptors** indicate the reasons (e.g., violence, sexual content, language) that a game was assigned a particular age rating.
- **Interactive elements** indicate interactive aspects of a game (e.g., if it displays the player's location to other players or allows the player to make in-app purchases, interact with other players, or have unrestricted access to the Internet).

Rating icons are trademarks of the participating rating authorities and cannot be altered or used in any way that is not expressly required or permitted by these guidelines.

## 2. DISPLAY OF ASSIGNED RATING INFORMATION

### **a. Most types of ads (e.g., in-app, online banners, print, out-of-home, emails, promotional items such as posters):**

The rating icon of the applicable region's rating authority and, if possible, the content descriptor(s) and interactive element(s) should be legibly displayed (i.e., large enough and clear enough to be read by most consumers) in advertising and marketing materials placed in the rating authority's respective region as in each example below:



**NOTE:** If the content descriptors and interactive elements are displayed in addition to the rating icon, then there should be a solid line separating the content descriptors and interactive elements (see examples).

For smaller advertisements where it is not possible to legibly display the rating icon (e.g., in-app ads on phones, banner ads under 175,000 pixels), the rating information can be displayed in text (e.g., "ESRB: "TEEN," "PEGI 12," "USK ab 6").

### **Official websites:**

The rating icon and, if possible, the content descriptor(s) and the interactive element(s) should be legibly displayed on all developer/publisher-controlled websites and product-specific webpages. The rating icon should be at least 68 pixels high. Where geo-fencing of websites is not feasible, display of multiple age rating icons from different rating authorities (e.g., ESRB, PEGI, USK) can be displayed provided that the text of the respective region is displayed over each rating icon (e.g., "US/CANADA" over the ESRB icon, "EUROPE" over the PEGI age label).

## b. Trailers and videos displayed online:

Rating information should be displayed in one of the following two ways:

### i. Rating Display for Online Trailers and Videos:

The rating icon and, if possible, the content descriptor(s) should be displayed on a slate at a minimum of 50% of the height of the video **prior to the start** of the trailer/video for at least **two seconds**, as follows:



### ii. Alternative rating display option if the content of the trailer/video is suitable for children under 13 years of age (i.e., contains no graphic content, see Section 5.c. below) and for pre-roll and other paid video ads:

The rating icon should be superimposed over the lower left- or right-hand side of the screen at a minimum of 15% of the height of the screen during at least the **first**:

- Two seconds for trailers/videos 15 seconds or less; or
- Four seconds for trailers/videos longer than 15 seconds

The superimposed icon should start on the first frame of the Video



#### Please note:

- Display of multiple age rating icons for the same product from different rating boards (e.g., ESRB, PEGI, USK, etc.) on a trailer/video is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**.
- **Paid ads (where the publisher/developer has paid for placement)** should be suitable for children under 13 years of age unless the platform/site on which the ad appears is able to direct by the registered age of the user who is logged into the platform/site and only displays content that is inappropriate for children to those of the appropriate age. **Publishers/developers posting trailers and other videos (where they did not pay for placement)** that have content not appropriate for children should only display this content to those of the appropriate age by using the age targeting tools or warning screens offered by the platform.

### c. Television Ads

The rating icon should be superimposed over the **start** or **end** of the television ad and should appear at a minimum of 15% of the height of the video for at least:

- Two seconds for ads 15 seconds or less; or
- Four seconds for ads longer than 15 seconds

Alternatively, a slate as outlined in Section 2.b.i. can also be displayed prior to the start of TV ads.

Please check with the rating authority in your region to see if a voiceover stating the game's rating should be included or if pre-recorded voiceovers are available for synchronization with the display of the rating icon. See Section 6 for contact information.

All TV ads should be suitable for a general audience as outlined in Section 5.c.



## 3. PRE-RELEASE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Developers/publishers should complete the IARC questionnaire prior to the product becoming available for pre-order. Advertisements (or pre-orders) that appear prior to game's release should display the assigned IARC rating.

## 4. RESPONSIBLE TARGETING

A game should not be advertised or marketed to or primarily appeal to persons younger than the game's assigned age rating.

### BEST PRACTICES FOR COMPLYING WITH THE ABOVE GUIDELINE:

- Advertising and marketing materials should only be placed in broadcast, cable, radio, print, and internet/digital media vehicles where at least 65% of the audience is reasonably expected to be the same age or older than the assigned age rating for the game being advertised. Reliable up-to-date audience composition data for a comparable month, quarter, or flight from a syndicated data source for the applicable media should be used to determine audience composition data.
- Appropriate measures and best efforts should be taken so that advertising and marketing materials are not placed at live events unless at least 65% of the audience is reasonably expected to be the same age or older than the assigned age rating.
- Where targeting ads by user age on mobile devices, social media, and live streaming sites is feasible, the ads should be targeted only to persons of the same age or older than the assigned age rating.
- Email marketing messages should only be directed to persons who have registered as the same age or older than the assigned age rating.
- A game should not be cross marketed with other products, brands, or events intended for persons for whom they are not rated as appropriate.

## 5. AD CONTENT

- a. **Ads should accurately reflect the nature and content of the game being promoted and the rating that has been assigned (i.e., an ad should not mislead the consumer about the game's true character).**

*For example: If a game does not contain blood or suggestive themes, then the ad should not portray any type of blood or suggestive themes.*

- b. **Ads should not glamorize or exploit the rating in order to market a game.**

*For example: Ads should not contain phrases like "a Teen rating has never been pushed this far."*

- c. **Paid ads (i.e., banners, TV spots, pre-roll, or any video or trailer for which the developer/publisher has provided money, make goods, barter, or any other consideration of value for placement) should be suitable for a general audience and should not contain any content that is likely to offend a reasonable parent or consumer, such as:**

*Gratuitous violence, blood, characters being shot, violent blows to the head; weapons pointed at head, depictions of fatal injuries and/or suicide, strangulation/choking, impaling; wounds inflicted with swords/knives, dismemberment; decapitation; torture; full or partial nudity; any type of sexual activity; overly sexualized depictions of body parts (e.g., breasts, buttocks); illegal drugs; child or animal abuse; molestation; rape; irresponsible behavior (e.g., underage drinking, drinking and driving); women harassed, beaten, bound or gagged; people on fire; offensive language or gestures; profanity; hate speech; racial epithets; defecation; urination; sacrilege; offensive depictions of physically or mentally disabled individuals.*

- d. **Ads should not exploit politically or socially sensitive topics (such as terrorist acts), leverage a tragic event, or promote criminal or fraudulent behavior.**

## 6. CONTACT INFO FOR PARTICIPATING IARC RATING AUTHORITIES

- For questions regarding any of the above guidelines or to submit advertising or marketing materials for review prior to distribution to the public, please contact:

[Australian Classification Board \(ACB\)](#) – Australia  
[Classificação Indicativa \(ClassInd\)](#) – Brazil  
[Digital Game Self-regulation Committee \(DGSC, TCA\)](#) – Taiwan  
[Entertainment Software Rating Board \(ESRB\)](#) – U.S. and Canada  
[Game Rating and Administration Committee \(GRAC\)](#) – South Korea  
[Pan European Game Information \(PEGI\)](#) – Europe  
[Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle \(USK\)](#) – Germany

An IARC generic rating is used in territories without a participating rating authority.

- **NOTE:** These guidelines do not replace the requirement to comply with applicable laws and regulations (including, but not limited to, advertising laws) in each respective territory.

**7. DOWNLOAD LIBRARY** – High resolution vector-based versions of the IARC-generated icons can be [downloaded here](#).

All rating icons must be replicated exactly as provided by IARC with no changes in shape, color, or design. Any deviation from this format is strictly prohibited, including, but not limited to, display of icons at an angle or use of transparent icons.

