

IAB Australia Best Practice Guide

Alcohol Advertisers in Digital Audio (Buyers)

Overview

This guide supports digital audio buyers in ensuring alcohol advertising is only served to appropriate audiences, in line with **ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code** requirements in Australia.

Understand the ABAC Marketing Code

Under the **ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code**, advertisers have a responsibility to ensure their messages:

- are age restricted/targeted to exclude under 18 year olds where possible
- are only placed where the audience is **reasonably expected to be at least 80% 18+**
- are not placed with programs or content primarily aimed at under 18s

Failure to comply with the code can have brand and reputation damage along with listeners complaints being upheld by ABAC.

Choose ABAC-Aware Publishers

As a buyer who may be representing another parties advertising interest, it is your responsibility to do your due diligence on the publishers you choose to invest with:

- Partner only with **publishers who have strong age-targeting, content tagging, and brand safety practices.**
 - Request documentation or case studies on how they ensure **age-appropriate inventory classification.**
 - Ask how they **tag and block youth-skewed content** (e.g. gaming, animation, pop culture influencers).
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Use Robust Targeting and Exclusion Filters

Technology can now lower the risk of your alcohol advertising reaching the wrong audience, ensure you partner with a publisher who can offer this technical layer of protection:

- Always apply **age-based targeting** to ensure ads only serve to listeners 18+.
- Set **exclusion filters** to block:
 - Youth-oriented genres (e.g. family, teen pop, children's stories)
 - Podcasts or playlists flagged as general or youth appeal

- If programmatic: ensure DSP partners apply **ABAC-aligned pre-bid filters**.
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Understand the Content Environment

As a buyer who may be representing another parties advertising interest, it is your responsibility to do your due diligence on the publishers you choose to invest with:

- Review publisher inventory reports and ask for **audience composition data** (e.g. Nielsen, first-party data).
 - Request a "**safe list**" of 18+ content, or a **blocklist** of youth-skewed shows/playlists.
 - Avoid content that:
 - Features youth influencers
 - Covers school life, teen romance, or children's entertainment
 - Uses animated characters or childlike voices
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Ensure Creative Compliance

The audio creative used for alcohol advertising also needs to comply with ABAC regulations, consider the below:

Even if your placement is appropriate, your **creative must also comply** with ABAC:

- No depictions of under-25s **unless they're shown in a secondary, non-prominent way**.
- Avoid content or tone that could appeal strongly to minors:
 - No cartoons
 - No child-like humor or themes
 - No slang or references popular with youth culture
- Avoid messaging around **social or sexual success** linked to drinking.
- Avoid messaging around **irresponsible consumption** and suggestions of **health benefits** – see ABAC content compliance checklist - <http://www.abac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ABAC-Alcohol-Marketing-Content-Checklist-28-4-23.pdf>

Top Tip: Use the **ABAC pre-vetting service** before launch to ensure your audio script is compliant.

Monitor and Audit Regularly

Technology can only do so much, so ensure there is human intervention across the campaign timings:

- Request **post-campaign reports** from publishers with placement transparency.
- Spot-check ad placements across platforms.

- Have a clear **remediation plan** with media partners if a misplacement occurs (e.g. remove ads, report to ABAC if needed).
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Collaborate with Media Buyers and Platforms

Many people and platforms are involved in an advertising campaign, so ensure your policies, documentation and education platforms are up to date:

- Educate media buying teams on ABAC compliance.
 - Document your ad serving policies and ensure platforms (DSPs, SSPs, publishers) align.
 - Where possible, include **ABAC compliance terms in media contracts**.
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Useful Resources

- <https://www.abac.org.au/about/thecode/>
- [ABAC Pre-Vetting Service](#)