

ASA announces changes to advertising code

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) of South Africa announced this morning, Thursday, 2 December 2010, that it has adopted substantial changes to its Code of Advertising Practice, including updates to its individual codes that are determined by various member organisation or negotiated with governmental institutions.



The code, which forms the guiding document of the industry, is revised annually to keep pace with the dynamics of the South African society and to meet the changing needs of the marketing and communications industry.

The provisions of the code are mostly broadly framed but special rules, covered by the Appendices, apply to particular audiences and to certain categories of products and services:

- Appendix A sees the introduction of a new Code of Practice for the Marketing of Health Products, which has now replaced Appendix H (previously advertising for over-the counter medicines).

- The Industry Association for Responsible Alcohol Use (ARA) has inserted a new Code of Commercial Communication in Appendix B.
- Appendix C that covers advertising of cosmetics has been updated, relating to cosmetic cellulite products and preparations containing sunscreens.
- The Direct Marketing Association of South Africa revised its Appendix D, resulting in the deletion of some provisions and the renumbering of remaining provisions.
- A new guideline, Guideline 10 has been included in the code. This covers a new ARA Underage Line Policy, covering TV, radio, print and outdoor advertising.

"These Guidelines are not part of the ASA Code but relate to laws, rulings and procedures that can affect the preparation of advertising copy," says Fred Makgato, ASA legal and regulatory affairs head.

"Users are advised to study the full implications of the particular law before proceeding with advertising, as it must not be taken for granted that the laws listed have not been amended."

The role of the ASA is to act as a facilitator between those representing the public interest and those representing the industry when standards are set. The ASA also keeps abreast of international standards and will inform the Code Revision Committee of trends and changes.

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