

CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR IMPORTED PUBLICATIONS

PREAMBLE

- 1 Content regulation for imported publications aims to reflect community standards while ensuring that due consideration is given to artistic and educational merits of the publication. The purpose of the content guidelines is to protect the young while allowing greater choice for adults.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1 Publications should not undermine national interest, public security or public confidence in the law and its enforcement in Singapore.
- 2 Content related to race and religion should not denigrate, offend the sensitivities of, or incite intolerance or misunderstanding among the main racial and religious groups in Singapore.
- 3 Publications that encourage, promote or glamorise sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles and deviant sexual practices are generally not allowed.
- 4 Nudity and descriptions and depictions of sexual activity should not be excessive or exploitative.
- 5 Excessive or sexually-explicit coarse language is disallowed but some leeway is given for books.
- 6 Crime, violence and other anti-social behaviour must not be promoted.
- 7 Drug abuse must not be promoted.
- 8 Teens and young persons should be protected from content likely to harm or disturb them.
- 9 Cover pages of publications should be appropriate for public display so as to protect young persons from unsuitable material and adults from exposure to unsolicited material that they may find offensive.

CONTENT GUIDELINES

- 1 The following genres of publications may contain sensitive content or target the young, which require greater responsibility on the part of importers and retailers. Detailed guidelines are provided to guide importers and retailers in self-regulation.

A	Teen Magazines	Page 3
B	Sex & Massage Manuals	Page 5
C	Erotic Fiction	Page 6
D	Art Publications	Page 7
E	Religious Publications	Page 8
F	Publications on Martial Arts & Topics of Violence	Page 9
G	Calendars and Posters	Page 10
H	Adult-interest Lifestyle Magazines	Page 11
I	Comics	Page 14
J	Glossary	Page 17
K	Consumer Advice	Page 18
L	Restricted Publications Scheme	Page 20
M	Investigation of Breaches	Page 20
N	Appeals	Page 20

A TEEN MAGAZINES

- 1 Teen magazines are widely read by teenagers and as such the content should be suitable for a young reader.

Cover Page

- 2 Cover pages must be wholesome both in terms of visuals and text.

Sex

- 3 Sex education as a topic can be featured but the articles and interviews should be written in an educational and responsible manner. Instructions on sexual techniques and sex positions should not be featured and articles should also not promote sexually permissive or promiscuous lifestyles.
- 4 Articles and columns on sexual content should not be too detailed and explicit.
- 5 Pictures and illustrations of sex or other sexual activities are not allowed.

Sexually Permissive & Alternative Lifestyles

- 6 Teen publications should not encourage or promote sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles e.g. group sex and sexual activity involving persons of the same gender.
- 7 Pictures and illustrations of sexually permissive lifestyles and alternative lifestyles must not be featured.

Deviant Sexual Activity

- 8 Teen publications should not encourage or promote deviant sexual practices.
- 9 Pictures and illustrations of deviant sexual activity must not be featured e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage.

Nudity

- 10 Models in sexually suggestive poses or see-through clothes should not be featured.
- 11 Nudity in teen publications is not allowed.

Language

- 12 Coarse language is not allowed.

Crime and Violence

- 13 Crime, violence and other anti-social behaviour must not be promoted
- 14 Graphic descriptions and depictions of violence, torture and gore are not allowed.

Drug Use

- 15 Drug abuse should not be encouraged.
- 16 Descriptions or depictions of drugs and the side effects of drug use may be featured in the context of an educational article discouraging drug abuse. However detailed illustrations or instructions of drug abuse such as the process of making and administering drug, and interviews describing, glamorising and promoting drug abuse are not allowed.

B SEX & MESSAGE MANUALS

- 1 Sex manuals contain instructions on sexual techniques and are intended to enhance the reader's sexual life.
- 2 Covers should be appropriate for public display and must not feature nudity, sexual positions or sexually-explicit text.
- 3 Sex manuals may contain depictions of nudity and sexual positions and deal purely with the subject of sex. However, genitalia should not be exposed.
- 4 Massage manuals are held to the same standards as sex manuals as they may contain instructions and illustrations in the use of massage techniques for erotic purposes.

Sex

- 5 As sex manuals are mainly intended to be instructional, descriptions and depictions of sex should not be exploitative or excessive.

Sexually Permissive & Alternative Lifestyles

- 6 Sex manuals should not contain descriptions and depictions of sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles e.g. sexual activity involving persons of the same gender and partner swapping or group sex.

Deviant Sexual Activity

- 7 Sex manuals should not contain descriptions and depictions of deviant sexual practices e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage.

Conditions of sale

- 8 Due to the adult nature of sex manuals, these publications should carry consumer advice and are to be placed under the Restricted Publications Scheme i.e. no promotion through advertising, active marketing and prominent display (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice** and **L. Restricted Publications Scheme** for details).

C **EROTIC FICTION**

- 1 Erotic fiction refers to fiction that deals with sex.
- 2 Covers should be appropriate for public display and must not feature nudity, sexual positions or sexually-explicit text.

Sex

- 3 Descriptions of sex should not be exploitative or excessive.

Sexually Permissive & Alternative Lifestyles

- 4 Erotic fiction should not contain descriptions and depictions of sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles e.g. sexual activity involving persons of the same gender and partner swapping or group sex.

Deviant Sexual Activity

- 5 Erotic fiction should not promote or glamorise deviant sexual practices e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage.

Conditions of sale

- 6 Due to the adult nature of erotic fiction, these publications should carry consumer advice and are to be placed under the Restricted Publications Scheme i.e. no promotion through advertising, active marketing and prominent display. (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice** and **L. Restricted Publications Scheme** for details).

D **ART PUBLICATIONS**

- 1 Art publications refer to publications dealing with art forms in print e.g. paintings, figure-drawings, design and photography. They generally consist wholly or partly of illustrations and photographs.
- 2 Art publications are given more flexibility if there is artistic merit. The degree of realism, treatment and presentation of content are other factors which are considered.

Sex

- 3 Depictions of sex should be tastefully done and not exploitative or excessive.

Sexually Permissive & Alternative Lifestyles

- 4 Art publications should not contain depictions of sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles e.g. sexual activity involving persons of the same gender and partner swapping or group sex.

Deviant Sexual Activity

- 5 Art publications should not promote or glamorise deviant sexual practices e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage.

Nudity

- 6 Depictions of full frontal nudity may be allowed if it is tastefully done, and not excessive or explicit.

Conditions of sale

- 7 Art publications with stronger nudity elements should carry consumer advice and are to be placed under the Restricted Publications Scheme i.e. no promotion through advertising, active marketing and prominent display. (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice and L. Restricted Publications Scheme** for details).

E RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS

- 1 Religious publications should not undermine racial and religious harmony in Singapore.
- 2 Publications that denigrate or offend the sensitivities of any racial or religious group are not allowed. However, debates on and expositions of theological differences between different religions or between denominations and sects of the same religion are allowed provided they do not denigrate or attack the faiths that are being compared.
- 3 Religious tracts, such as handouts, leaflets, and brochures, have the potential to offend religious sensitivities on a large scale because they can be freely distributed to the public. As such, they are treated more stringently.
- 4 The following are disallowed:
 - (i) Publications that promote the teachings of the Church of Satan
 - (ii) Publications by cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Unification Church (Moonies), Children of God (New World Vision, Family Love) and Church of Scientology.
 - (iii) Publications that promote hatred and enmity against other racial and religious groups.
 - (iv) Religious publications that encourage revolt against the establishment and the government.
 - (v) Publications that glorify, promote or justify acts of violence as a religious duty.
 - (vi) Publications written by those who subscribe to and embrace terrorist ideologies.
 - (vii) Portrayals of religious beliefs, figures and practices which could be regarded as irreverent by religious groups.
 - (viii) Illustrations/visuals of Prophet Muhammad.
 - (ix) Desecration of religious images, symbols and objects e.g. defacement of a religious symbol.

F PUBLICATIONS ON MARTIAL ARTS & TOPICS OF VIOLENCE

- 1 Self-defence using hands and legs are allowed.
- 2 Self-defence using sharp-edged items as weapons e.g. knives, katanas, swords, sickles and shurikens will be treated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3 The following are disallowed:
 - (i) Publications which instruct on ways to make and use arms and bombs and those which encourage other forms of terrorist acts.
 - (ii) Suicide manuals.

G **CALENDARS AND POSTERS**

- 1 As calendars and posters are displayed at public places, they have the potential to cause offence. Therefore, strict standards are imposed on them to protect young persons from unsuitable material and adults from exposure to unsolicited material that they may find offensive.

- 2 Covers should be appropriate for public display and must not feature nudity, including models in see-through clothes which reveal pubic hair, genitalia or women's nipples.

- 3 The following are not allowed:
 - (i) Depictions of bare-breasted women and full frontal nudity.

 - (ii) Models in see-through clothes which reveal pubic hair or genitalia.

 - (iii) Portrayals of sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles e.g. sexual activity involving persons of the same gender and partner swapping or group sex.

 - (iv) Portrayals of deviant sexual practices e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage.

Conditions of sale

- 4 Calendars and posters depicting sexually suggestive poses should carry consumer advice and are to be placed under the Restricted Publications Scheme i.e. no promotion through advertising, active marketing and prominent display (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice** and **L. Restricted Publications Scheme** for details).

H ADULT-INTEREST LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES

- 1 Men's and women's lifestyle magazines that target adults fall within the class of *adult-interest lifestyle magazines*.

Cover Page

- 2 Covers should be appropriate for public display and must not feature nudity, sexual positions or sexually-provocative text. The following are not allowed:
 - (i) Models in sexually suggestive poses that are excessively revealing e.g. appearing naked with breasts and/or genitals covered by hands.
 - (ii) Models in see-through clothes which reveal pubic hair, genitalia or women's nipples
 - (iii) Promotion of alternative lifestyles or deviant sexual practices

Sex

- 3 Depictions of sexually suggestive poses must not be exploitative, excessive or explicit.
- 4 Depictions of sexual activities must not be exploitative or excessive and must be relevant to the story (e.g. instructional depictions for sexual positions in an article).
- 5 Descriptions of sex between heterosexual couples may be featured but these should not be exploitative or excessive.
- 6 Articles on activities such as pornography and prostitution must not glamorise such activities.

Sexually Permissive & Alternative Lifestyles

- 7 Lifestyle magazines should not encourage or promote sexually permissive and alternative lifestyles.
- 8 Lifestyle magazines should not carry excessive and explicit depictions of deviant sexual practices e.g. group sex, paedophilia, bestiality and strong fetishes.

Deviant Sexual Activity

- 9 Publications should not encourage or promote deviant sexual practices.
- 10 Pictures and illustrations of deviant sexual practices e.g. paedophilia, bestiality and fetishes such as bondage. must not be featured.

Alternative Lifestyle/Deviant Sexual Activity

- 11 Lifestyle magazines should not encourage or promote alternative lifestyles and deviant sexual activities (e.g. group sex, paedophilia, bestiality and strong fetishes).
- 12 Lifestyle magazines should not carry excessive and explicit depictions of deviant sexual practices e.g. group sex, paedophilia, bestiality and strong fetishes.

Nudity

- 13 Depictions of full frontal nudity and genitals must not be featured. However, some leeway may be given for nudity in a non-sexual context.
- 14 Depictions of bare-breasted women may be allowed but must not be exploitative or excessive.

Language

- 15 Use of coarse language may be allowed but must not be excessive.

Crime and Violence

- 16 Crime, violence and other anti-social behaviour must not be promoted.
- 17 Descriptions and depictions of violence, torture, blood and gore must not be excessive, gratuitous or exploitative.

Drug Use

- 18 Factual and objective descriptions of types of drugs and their effects may be featured but drug abuse must not be promoted.
- 19 Descriptions and depictions of drug abuse must not be explicit or excessive (e.g. detailed instructions on the process of making and administering drugs; interviews describing and promoting drug abuse are not allowed).

Supplements/Special Editions/Collections

- 20 The same standards for lifestyle magazines apply to supplements.
- 21 Supplements on alternative lifestyles and deviant sexual practices are not allowed.

Conditions of Sale

- 22 Adult-interest lifestyle magazines, which may contain content that is unsuitable for the young, should be shrinkwrapped and carry Consumer advice (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice** for details).

I COMICS

1 “Comics” is a form of visual art consisting of images which are commonly combined with text to tell a story. The most common forms of printed comics are comic strips, comic books and graphic novels.

2 Comics are allowed under two categories:

(i) General Release

(ii) Consumer Advice - required to be shrink wrapped and carry consumer advice (“Unsuitable for the Young”).

Guidelines For General Release

3 The content of a comic including its depictions, theme and storyline, released under this category, should be appropriate for general readers. But comics targeted specifically at very young children should have content appropriate for that age group.

Cover

4 The cover of a comic must be suitable for public display. It should not feature for example, any depiction of extreme violence, nudity, or that which is sexually suggestive.

Nudity

5 Outline nude drawings which are not in a sexual context (e.g. medical treatment of patients) are allowed.

6 Depictions of nudity showing the details of genitals, pubic hair or female breasts are disallowed.

Sex

7 Depictions of lovemaking in silhouette with little or no details are allowed if they are not excessive.

8 Sexually suggestive depictions (e.g. women with legs spread-eagled) are allowed if they are few and infrequent.

9 Explicit depictions of sexual activity (e.g. sexual positions) are disallowed.

Alternative lifestyles / Deviant sexual practices

10 Themes or depictions of alternative lifestyles or deviant sexual practices should not be featured e.g. homosexuality, group sex and sado-masochism.

Language

- 11 Infrequent use of coarse language is allowed.

Crime and Violence

- 12 Depictions of violence (e.g. stabbing) may be allowed if not detailed, excessive or exploitative.
- 13 Depictions of sexual violence (such as rape) are disallowed.
- 14 Crime and violence should not be promoted.

Anti-Social Activities and Drug Abuse

- 15 Anti-social activities (such as hooliganism & gangsterism) and drug abuse should not be encouraged or promoted.

Guidelines For Consumer Advice (CA)

- 16 Comics with adult themes and content which are unsuitable for the young should be shrinkwrapped and carry Consumer advice (Please refer to **K. Consumer Advice** for details).

Cover

- 17 The cover of a comic book must be suitable for public display. It should not feature, for example, any depiction of extreme violence, nudity, or that which is sexually suggestive.

Nudity

- 18 Depictions of bare-breasted women may be allowed if not excessive or sexually suggestive.
- 19 Depictions of nudity with genitals and pubic hair visible may be allowed if not detailed or excessive.
- 20 Gratuitous depictions of nudity are disallowed.

Sex

- 21 Depictions of sex (including foreplay) between heterosexual couples may be allowed if not detailed or exploitative.

- 22 Sexually suggestive depictions may be allowed provided they are not excessive or exploitative.

Alternative lifestyles / Deviant sexual practices

- 23 Themes of alternative lifestyles or deviant sexual practices e.g. homosexuality, group sex and sado-masochism, should not be featured.
- 24 Depictions of alternative lifestyles or deviant sexual practices may be allowed if they are infrequent, non-explicit and only appear as a sub-plot.

Language

- 25 Use of strong coarse language may be allowed if not excessive.

Crime and Violence

- 26 Depictions of violence may be allowed if they are not gratuitous or extreme. Examples of extreme depictions include gory illustrations of dismemberment and gouging out the eyes.
- 27 Depictions of sexual violence should not be excessive or exploitative.
- 28 Crime and violence (including sexual violence such as rape) should not be promoted.

Anti-social activities

- 29 Depictions of anti-social activities (such as hooliganism and gangsterism) should not be excessive and promotion of such activities is disallowed.

Drug abuse

- 30 Depictions of types of drugs and their effects may be allowed.
- 31 Detailed depictions of methods of drug abuse should not be featured.
- 32 Promotion of drug abuse is disallowed.

J Glossary

- 1 **Alternative lifestyle** – unconventional manner of living atypical of the concept of the traditional family e.g. homosexuality and bisexuality.
- 2 **Coarse language** - abusive, vulgar, or irreverent language with high level impact.
- 3 **Deviant sexual activity/practice** – behaviour which is atypical of mainstream sexual practices e.g. sado-masochism, fetishism, incest fantasies and sexual activity involving minors.
- 4 **Depiction** - representation through image e.g. photographs and illustrations.
- 5 **Description** - representation through text e.g. articles, interviews or advice columns.
- 6 **Excessive** - exceeds reasonable limits, especially in terms of frequency or detail.
- 7 **Explicit** - with nothing hidden or implied.
- 8 **Exploitative** – to purposely debase, abuse or exaggerate to attract readers.
- 9 **Extreme** - of the highest degree or intensity.
- 10 **Promote** – to write or depict in such a manner so as to glamorise a behaviour or practice and/or encourage readers that such behaviour is acceptable and desirable.
- 11 **Sexually permissive lifestyle** – unconventional sexual behavior exhibited in activities such as partner swapping and group sex.

K CONSUMER ADVICE

9.1 Publications are required to carry consumer advice to provide information for consumers to make informed choices. The consumer advice also serves as a guide to inform adults, especially parents, about the suitability of a publication for children.

9.2 The standard consumer advice labels are:

i. **Unsuitable for the Young**

Publications with mature content which are not suitable for the young should be shrink-wrapped with the consumer advice “Unsuitable for the Young”. Retailers are encouraged to exercise responsibility and not sell such publications to the young. They should also ensure that such publications are not easily accessible to the young.

Language	Descriptor
English	UNSUITABLE FOR THE YOUNG
Chinese	青少年不宜
Malay	TIDAK SESUAI UNTUK REMAJA
Tamil	இளையர்களுக்கு ஏற்றதல்ல

ii. **Parental Guidance Recommended**

Publications which are targeted at children but with content where parental guidance would be appropriate should carry the consumer advice “Parental Guidance Recommended”.

Language	Descriptor
English	PARENTAL GUIDANCE RECOMMENDED
Chinese	建议师长辅导
Malay	BIMBINGAN IBU BAPA DISARANKAN
Tamil	பெற்றோரின் ஆலோசனை தேவை

9.3 Where necessary, other relevant consumer advice labels could be used to reflect the contentious content in the publication to better inform consumers. Importers, distributors and retailers of publications may consult IMDA if in doubt.

9.4 The consumer advice must be placed prominently on the top 1/3 section of cover pages. Price or promotional stickers must not be placed over the consumer advice. Importers, distributors and retailers should exercise responsibility in ensuring that the consumer advice is properly affixed to the publications before distribution.

9.5 The specifications for the consumer advice labels are as below:

Size of Label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5cm by 5.5cm • 2cm by 7cm 												
Border of Label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 point 												
Font Type & Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English/Malay – Arial 16 Bold • Chinese – Simsum 20 • Tamil – Nirmala UI 10 												
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L **RESTRICTED PUBLICATIONS SCHEME (RPS)**

- 1 The Restricted Publications Scheme (RPS) allows for publications such as sex manuals that contain content which may offend certain segments of the public but have redeeming artistic or educational merit. Such publications can be made available to adults while protecting the young through conditions of sale to restrict access.
- 2 Publications released under the RPS should be shrink-wrapped and carry the consumer advice “Unsuitable for the Young” and should not be promoted through advertising and active marketing.
- 3 In addition, such publications should not be easily accessible to children e.g. placed on low shelves and prominently displayed at the shop window or singled out for display on a separate shelf or stand.
- 4 Importers are to refer publications for consideration under the RPS to IMDA.

M **INVESTIGATION OF BREACHES**

- 1 Upon the Authority’s detection of a likely breach of the Content Guidelines, the Authority shall commence investigations. The Authority may require the affected importer or retailer to provide such information, records, documents or other materials as may be necessary for the purpose of its investigations

N **APPEALS**

- 1 Appeals to the Minister against the detention of any publication must be made within 14 days of the issue of a detention notice.