



Understanding classifications—home entertainment

Classifications help you decide which films to choose

Classifications tell you about the impact of the content and the most suitable audience for a film or computer game.

Who decides the classification?

Generally, all films and computer games for sale or hire in Australia must be classified by the Classification Board, which is broadly representative of the Australian community.

Classifications

G is an advisory classification

The content is very mild in impact.

G films and computer games are for general viewing. While many G films and computer games are for children, not all will be of interest to them.

PG is an advisory classification

The content is mild in impact.

PG films and computer games contain material that a parent or carer might need to explain to younger children.

M is an advisory classification

The content is moderate in impact.

M films and computer games are not recommended for people aged under 15 as a level of maturity is required.

MA 15+ is a legally restricted classification

The content is strong in impact.

MA 15+ films and computer games are not suitable for people aged under 15.

A person aged under 15 cannot purchase or rent an MA 15+ film or computer game unless accompanied by his or her parent or an adult guardian (in Queensland the person under 15 must be accompanied by an adult).



Who qualifies as a 'guardian' for a person under 15?

The 'guardian' must be an adult exercising 'parental control' over the person under 15 years of age. The guardian needs to be 18 years or older. An older sibling or friend would not generally satisfy this requirement, whereas a grandparent, aunt or uncle may.

What is the difference between M and MA 15+

There is no legal restriction on who can see an M film or play an M computer game. The content for M films and computer games are moderate and a mature perspective is required. M films and computer games are recommended for people aged 15 or older.

A person needs to be 15 or older to purchase an MA 15+ film or play an MA 15+ game. The content is strong and unsuitable for people aged under 15. However people under 15 can purchase and play an MA 15+ film or computer game if accompanied by their parent or an adult guardian.

R 18+ is a legally restricted classification

The content is high in impact.

R 18+ films and computer games are not suitable for people aged under 18.

People aged under 18 cannot purchase or rent an R 18+ film or computer game.

Selling, hiring or advertising DVDs

Generally, all films (including DVDs, enhanced CDs and videos) and computer games which are sold/hired or are displayed for sale/hire must be classified. Only a narrow range of films and computer games may be exempt from classification. These titles may be marked as exempt.

Demonstrating or screening a computer game in store

Only classified computer games can be demonstrated in a public place. 'Demonstrate' includes to screen or make available to play. There are restrictions on the demonstration of MA 15+ and R 18+ computer games in a public place in all states and territories. This would generally include department stores and internet cafes.

Consumer advice

Additional information about the film or computer game, called 'consumer advice' gives an indication of specific content (examples are violence, language, sex). Generally the strongest content is indicated in the consumer advice. An example is:

Advertising unclassified films and computer games

Unclassified films and computer games can be advertised prior to classification. Advertising such as trailers and posters may display the following message:

If you see this message, check the classification before buying or hiring a film or computer game.

Copyright and piracy

You should be alert to unauthorised or pirated copies of films and computer games. These may be of inferior quality. They may also be unclassified and contain inappropriate material. Selling or distributing pirated product is a criminal offence.

Further information

You can obtain further information about the National Classification Scheme at <http://www.classification.gov.au/>.

Or contact:

Classification Branch
Locked Bag 3
HAYMARKET NSW 1240
Phone: 02 9289 7100
Fax: 02 9289 7101
Email: enquiries@classification.gov.au

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