

## **Censorship<sup>1</sup> in New Zealand**

Thank you for reading our information about censorship in [language]. We hope this information answers your questions about censorship in New Zealand.

If you have questions about television and radio censorship, please visit the website of the Broadcasting Standards Authority – [www.bsa.govt.nz](http://www.bsa.govt.nz).

### **THE CENSORSHIP LAW OF NEW ZEALAND IS CALLED *THE FILMS, VIDEOS AND PUBLICATIONS CLASSIFICATION ACT 1993*<sup>2</sup>**

The law allows the Office of Film and Literature Classification<sup>3</sup> to classify<sup>4</sup> material such as films, DVDs, books, videogames, magazines and computer files. Films need to have official New Zealand classification labels to be sold, hired, or exhibited<sup>5</sup> in New Zealand. Age restricted<sup>6</sup> videogames must have official New Zealand classification labels to be sold, hired, or exhibited in New Zealand.

### **How Censorship Law Affects You and Your Family**

Censorship law in New Zealand helps to protect your family from harmful material.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CENSORSHIP LAW**

- It is against the law to give age restricted DVDs or videogames to people under the age of the restriction on the classification label.
- It is against the law to give age restricted DVDs, videogames, books, magazines, or computer files to young people even if the age restricted material does not have an age restricted classification label.
- It is against the law to give sexually explicit DVDs, books, magazines or computer files to people under the age of 18.

Read [\*Age restricted content\*](#) below for information about the kind of content that can be age restricted.

### **RED CLASSIFICATION LABELS ARE LEGAL AGE RESTRICTIONS**

The colours of the classification labels are like a traffic light:

- GREEN means anyone can view the film.
- YELLOW mean that anyone can view the film, but the film could be unsuitable for some viewers.

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<sup>1</sup> We have to be careful how this term is translated, and if it is used interchangeably with ‘classification’ – we have to ensure that the meaning is conveyed carefully and plainly.

<sup>2</sup> Should the name of the Act be in English or in the translated language?

<sup>3</sup> It is my understanding that best practice is to refer to the Classification Office and any other organisation or concept with its full name – I have done this throughout. Would you recommend this?

<sup>4</sup> We could use “age restrict or ban” instead of “classify”.

<sup>5</sup> These three terms have to be carefully looked at.

<sup>6</sup> “Age restricted” as opposed to “restricted” has been used throughout for clarity.

- RED means the film is age restricted. You must not show the film to people under the age on the label.

The descriptive note on a classification label informs you about the content in a film. This content might upset or offend some people.

### **The classification labels**

G – the film is suitable for everyone.

PG – anyone can view the film. Guidance from a parent or responsible adult is recommended if younger children are watching the film.

M – anyone can view the film. The film is more suitable for people over 16 years old.

RP13 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 13 years old unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

RP16 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 16 years old unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

R13 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 13 years old.

R15 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 15 years old.

R16 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 16 years old.

R18 – it is illegal to show the film to people under 18 years old.

### **SELLING DVDS**

You will need to get classification labels for your DVDs if you want to sell your DVDs in New Zealand. You can be fined up to \$3,000 for selling DVDs which do not have New Zealand classification labels.

### **Age restricted and illegal material**

#### **AGE RESTRICTED CONTENT**

Content which can be age restricted includes:

- Sex
- Horror
- Crime and dangerous behaviour
- Cruelty
- Violence
- Highly offensive language
- Suicide or self-harm

#### **ILLEGAL CONTENT**

Some content is always illegal in New Zealand:

- Sexual content which involves children
- Content which encourages sexual violence and coercion

- Content which encourages torture or extreme violence
- Sexual content which involves animals
- Sexual content which involves dead bodies
- Sexual content which involves urine or excrement

Some other content can also be illegal in New Zealand. This includes content that:

- Encourages<sup>7</sup> criminal behaviour
- Encourages violence
- Encourages sexual abuse of children
- Exploits child nudity
- Encourages degrading conduct and discrimination

### **POSSESSING ILLEGAL MATERIAL IS A CRIME**

It is a crime to possess, or to download from the internet, or to distribute illegal material. You can be imprisoned for up to 10 years for possessing, or for downloading from the internet, or for distributing illegal material. Read *Illegal content* above for information about the kind of content that is illegal.

### **The Censorship System in New Zealand**

#### **MORE THAN ONE ORGANISATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CENSORSHIP IN NEW ZEALAND**

##### **The Office of Film and Literature Classification**

- We are an independent government organisation.
- The Chief Censor is the head<sup>8</sup> of the Office of Film and Literature Classification.
- We classify material which may need to be age restricted or banned. Something may be age restricted or banned if it contains sex, horror, crime, cruelty, violence or offensive language.
- We classify all age restricted films, DVDs and videogames in New Zealand.
- We can also classify books, magazines, computer files, and more.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification also answers questions and complaints from the public. We conduct research about censorship issues. We also provide free advice, information and resources about censorship.

Members of the public can ask the Office of Film and Literature Classification to classify something – such as a book or magazine. See *Contact the Office of Film and Literature Classification* below for more information about getting something classified.

##### **The Film and Video Labelling Body<sup>9</sup>**

- Classifies films, DVDs and videogames that are *not* age restricted.
- Provides classification labels for all films and DVDs.

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<sup>7</sup> ‘promotes’ instead? We have to be careful to get the right concept.

<sup>8</sup> Not sure what term to use for ‘chief executive’.

<sup>9</sup> Should we use English, and then in brackets do a translation? Likewise for the Censorship Compliance Unit

## **POLICE, CUSTOMS, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS ENFORCE CENSORSHIP LAW IN NEW ZEALAND**

### **The Department of Internal Affairs**

The Censorship Compliance Unit of the Department of Internal Affairs is the main organisation that enforces the censorship law of New Zealand. The Censorship Compliance Unit enforces the classifications decided by the Office of Film and Literature Classification. The Censorship Compliance Unit is able to prosecute people or organisations for breaching the Classification Act.

Contact the Censorship Compliance Unit if you think that a person or an organisation may be breaking censorship law. Contact the Censorship Compliance Unit:

- [censorship@dia.govt.nz](mailto:censorship@dia.govt.nz)
- 0800 257 887
- [www.dia.govt.nz/Services-Censorship-Compliance-Index](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Services-Censorship-Compliance-Index)

### **The New Zealand Customs Service**

The Customs Service prevents banned material from entering New Zealand from other countries. Contact the Customs Service:

- [feedback@customs.govt.nz](mailto:feedback@customs.govt.nz)
- 0800 428 786

### **The Police**

The police work with the Customs Service and with the Department of Internal Affairs to enforce the censorship law of New Zealand. Contact your local police station for more information.

### **Contact the Office of Film and Literature Classification**

The Office of Film and Literature Classification responds to complaints and answers questions about censorship in New Zealand. Contact the Office of Film and Literature Classification:

- [information@censorship.govt.nz](mailto:information@censorship.govt.nz)
- 0508 236 767