

Annex A: The revised BCAP TV advertisement sound levels rule

6.9 Sound levels in advertisements

Advertisements must not be excessively noisy or strident. The maximum subjective loudness of advertisements must be consistent and in line with the maximum loudness of programmes and junction material.

Broadcasters must endeavour to minimise the annoyance that perceived imbalances could cause, with the aim that the audience need not adjust the volume of their television sets during programme breaks. For editorial reasons, however, commercial breaks sometimes occur during especially quiet parts of a programme, with the result that advertisements at normally acceptable levels seem loud in comparison.

Measurement and balancing of subjective loudness levels should preferably be carried out using a loudness-level meter, ideally conforming to ITU recommendations¹. If a peak-reading meter² is used instead, the maximum level of the advertisements must be at least 6dB less than the maximum level of the programmes³ to take account of the limited dynamic range exhibited by most advertisements.

Notes:

(1) *The relevant ITU recommendations are ITU-R BS1770 Algorithms to measure audio programme loudness and true-peak audio level and ITU-R BS1771 Requirements for loudness and true-peak indicating meters.*

(2) *Peak-reading meters should be a PPM Type IIa as specified in BS6840: Part 10, Programme Level Meters.*

(3) *Normal convention for analogue audio is that the peak sound level of programmes is set to be no higher than +8dBm, which corresponds to '6' on a peak-reading meter. The peak sound level of advertisements should therefore be limited to +2dBm or '4.5' on a peak-reading meter. Note: +8dBm corresponds to a digital audio level of -10dB relative to digital clipping level. ITU-R BS.645 and EBU recommendation R68-2000 describe how analogue audio levels should be translated into digital levels.*