

nfvcb
national film and video censors board



CENSORSHIP &
CLASSIFICATION
GUIDELINE



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA



nfvcb 
National Film & Video Censors Board

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- **North East**
Blk X, Co: Post Primary Management Board
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Federal Secretariat Complex,
Aba Road, Port-Harcourt.

Suggestion: Mild, discreet treatment of a subject in which an act or thing is hinted at, generally through discreet focus on part of, rather than the whole picture.

Stylised: (see Treatment)

Swearword: expletive, oath, curse, foul language

Themes: Social issues such as crime, suicide, drug and alcohol dependency, death, serious illness, family breakdown and ethnicism or racism.

Tone: The quality or feeling of material, such as its sadness, humour, menace, lightness, or seriousness.

Treatment: The artistic handling of a scene or a film, especially with regard to style. In a realistic treatment, the material appears real to the viewer. It may be close to real life, and feel authentic. In a stylised treatment, the viewer is conscious of the unreality; examples include musicals, horror films, animation and fantasy.

Unsuitable: Material that is not appropriate to viewers under 18 years, because of its ability to harm (cause developmental damage) or disturb (cause emotional trauma).

Violence: Includes not only acts of violence, but also the threat or result of violence.

Visual Reference: An image related to, but not of, classifiable elements such as violence, sex, and drug use.

Prophanity: blasphemy; language showing lack of respect in regard to religious or sacred matters



In pursuance of the powers vested in it under section 2(e) of the National Film and Video Censors Board Decree, 1993, the National Film and Video Censors Board (hereinafter referred to as "the Board") hereby publishes the preview, censorship and classification guidelines. The guidelines are to enable clarity and understanding in the censorship and classification process and decisions of the Board.

Sincerely,

Emeka Mba
Director General
2006.



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>> Introduction

Like all countries, Nigeria seeks to protect its young from unsuitable content and as a multi ethnic developing society; the country also needs to preserve ethnic racial and religious harmony. With the impact and influence of both Nigerian movies and the influx of foreign cultural imports, censorship will continue to play an important role in fostering a morally wholesome and socially cohesive society and safeguard core community values such as the importance of family, respect for one's elders and moral integrity.

The censorship and classification of films into varying categories not only allows adults the opportunity to see a wider range of films dealing with the realities of the adult world, but at the same time restricts children and youth from viewing what could be harmful to them, this is besides ensuring that other kinds of objectionable materials capable of inciting civil strife is reduced or eliminated completely. The classification system serves two different functions; first, it lays down a set of legally enforceable rules to restrict admission and access to adult films by minors. On the other hand, it offers to parents some advance information about the suitability of the film so that parents can make informed decisions about what to let their children watch.

As the Board moves closer towards classification, industry players must perform an equally crucial role as the government by adopting some degree of self censorship. Moving towards greater industry participation in regulation is important as technological advancements have made censorship by regulators difficult, and secondly, because it is more practical way to clear content in a timely manner for the consumers, without compromising standards. Industry players can help nurture a more enlightened and efficient censorship environment through consumer advice and co-regulation, including responsibility for film classification. To achieve this, regulators need to have a more transparent policies and guidelines.

Our role as a film regulatory body is to determine the likely impact of a movie on the audience, bearing in mind the age, social and religious sensitivities, as well as the overall social benefit of the material in question.

or indicated without actually being seen.

Intensity: Strength of treatment or subject matter.

Material: The content of films or videos.

Nudity: Nudity can consist of frontal or rear above and below waist visuals, full frontal or full rear visuals for both sexes, or breast nudity for females. The amount of detail is determined not only by the content of the nudity shown, but by other factors including closeness and duration of visuals, repetition, and clarity.

Offensive: Material which causes outrage or extreme disgust to most people.

Real: Actual

Realistic: (see Treatment)

Ritual: the use or depiction of the performance of religious or customary rites not restricted to African traditional religious rites.

Reasonable Adult: Possessing common sense and an open mind, and able to balance personal opinion with generally accepted community standards.

Sexual Activity: Matters pertaining to sexual arousal but not limited only to portrayals of sexual intercourse.

Sexual Violence: The act of sexual assault or aggression, in which the victim does not consent.

Sexualised Violence: Where sex and violence are connected in the story, although sexual violence may not necessarily occur.

Sexually Explicit Material: Real sex on screen.

Simulation: Simulated sexual activity is not real, but looks realistic.

Suggested: Mild, discreet treatment of a subject in which an act or thing is hinted at.



Drugs: Detailed instruction in the use of proscribed drugs is refused classification.

Elements: Classifiable elements include violence, sex, coarse language, adult themes, drug use, nudity - the Classification Board assesses the impact of these when making classification decisions.

Excessive Treatment, which exceeds reasonable limits, especially in terms of detail, duration or frequency

Explicit: candid, leaving nothing to the imagination; focusing on close up detail

Exploitative: Appearing to purposefully debase or abuse for the enjoyment of viewers, and lacking moral, artistic or other values.

Extreme: exceptionally intense, graphic or prolonged

Fantastical: not realistic, not of this world (eg. fairy tales, science fiction)

Fetish: the use or depiction of objects believed to have supernatural powers, also known as "juju". Fetish also refers to An object, an action, or a non-sexual part of the body which gives sexual gratification. Fetishes range from mild to offensive.

Frequency: how often something occurs

Gory: bloody; detailed, graphic images of violence

Graphic: vivid, showing all the details

Gratuitous: Material which is unwarranted or uncalled for, and included without the justification of a defensible story-line or artistic merit.

Harm/harmful: Cause developmental damage.

Impact: The strength of the effect on the viewer.

Implied: Depiction/s of a subject in which an act or thing is inferred



Detail of Guidelines

The detail of the Guidelines is set out in the following pages; however it must be emphasized that the Board's broad philosophy is to apply censorship criteria before classification. It therefore follows that the Board's main censorship considerations are based on Section 37 of the NFVCB ACT which states "the Censors and Classification Committee in reaching a decision on a film or video work shall ensure that:

such a film or video work has educational or entertainment value apart from promoting the Nigerian culture, unity and interest; and that such film or video work is not likely:

- to undermine national security; or
- to induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality; or
- to encourage or glorify the use of violence; or
- to expose the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt; or
- to encourage illegal or criminal acts; or
- to encourage racial, religions or ethnic discrimination or conflict; or
- by its contents to be blasphemous or obscene; or
- To denigrate the dignity of womanhood"

The Board's Censorship and Classification Guidelines reflect all these considerations and others to be set out later. They are also the product of feedback, research and the accumulated experience of the Board over many years.

Although the Guideline is not a legal document per se, it is based on the legal statues of the NFVCB Act, and is intended to be interpreted in the spirit of what is intended as well as in the letter. They cannot be a comprehensive account of everything that may at any time be of concern. Should issues arise which are not specifically covered here, they will be dealt with by the NFVCB on their merits and in line with the standards expressed and implied generally. At all times, the Board will strive to uphold the basic tenets of these guidelines subject to normal considerations of fairness and reasonableness.

These guidelines, which will be continually reviewed and updated, allow us to be objective yet flexible so we can maintain the integrity of our community standards, but also appreciate and accommodate artistic merit, or social and documentary significance.

▶ Main Issues in Classification



The following sets out the general concerns which apply to a greater or lesser degree in the decision to classify or censor film and video works. Each film must be examined and classified on its own merits.

Theme & Context

The acceptability of a theme depends significantly on its treatment, i.e. the context and sensitivity of its presentation. However, the most problematic themes (for example cultural and traditional religious practices, drug abuse, sex, and violence, ethnic or racial hatred or violence) are unlikely to be appropriate at the most junior levels of classification, and may even be refused classification altogether.

Language

The Censorship Committee take into consideration the accurate depiction of real-life actions and emotions, for script-writers to include "coarse" language. Many people are offended, some very deeply by the use of strong language. Care must be taken to avoid its use in such a way as to invite imitation by children. Expressions or expletives with sexual connotations, or expressions normally specifically used in the context of certain groups in Nigeria, should not be permitted in G, PG, 12. For other classification categories mild expletives with sexual connotations or coarse language may be used but only infrequently and must be justified in context. The depth of concern about any particular word or expression will also depend upon the context within which it is used. For these reasons, it is impossible to set out comprehensive lists of acceptable words or expressions which will satisfy all sections of the public.

Sex and Nudity

Whilst it's an often stated fact that the depiction of Natural nudity, providing there is no sexual context, is an established art form, Nigerians are however, particularly sensitive to public display of nudity and sex, however intended. Besides, the portrayal of human nakedness before children is unacceptable. Therefore such scenes must not be permitted in movies rated **G** and **PG**, and only to a very mild extent permissible in "12" movies.

The Board reserves the rights to requests cuts or edits and in some cases refuse classification for movies which have no artistic or entertainment value.

▼ Glossary of terms

Abuse: Maltreat or assault, especially sexually.

Advisory: (applies to G, and PG) These classifications do not legally restrict anyone from seeing or hiring the film. They recommend the most suitable audience for the film, in terms of age and level of parental supervision.

Adult Themes: issues dealing with aspects of adult life that are potentially harmful to minors, or disturbing. Adult themes may include verbal references to and depictions associated with issues such as suicide, crime, corruption, marital problems, emotional trauma, drug and alcohol dependency, death and serious illness, racism, religious issues.

Close up: an image in graphic detail, as if seen from very near

Coarse language: At G level, this might include "bloody" or "bastard". At PG level, it might include "shit". At 18, it includes "fuck".

Context: surroundings or background; the whole picture; the other parts of a film or video which come before and after a particular incident and clarify its meaning.

Coercion: The use of threat to force agreement to sexual activity.

Demean: A depiction or description, directly or indirectly sexual in nature, which debases or appears to debase the person or the character depicted.

Depiction: Representation, portrayal on screen.

Detail: The amount of verbal or visual information in the representation of a subject. Detail can include close-up visuals, repeated, prolonged or slow motion visuals, and accentuation through lighting.

Discreet: With little or no detail and generally brief

Disturb/disturbing: Cause emotional trauma.

Refused Classification and Cuts

The Board will at all times in the discharge of its mandate seek to preserve and promote artistic freedom, however there may be instances whereby the artistic expression may run foul of the law, and in the opinion of the Board may be obscene, and unacceptable at any classification category. The Board shall therefore require the producer or distributor to cut offensive scenes out, re-edit, etc, and in some instance such works may be refused classification altogether.

Please note however, that the Board will not accept and will refuse classification to any material that is in breach of any Nigerian laws. Whilst the Board does not have any taboo subjects, it is important that producers who intend to deal on certain sensitive subjects or themes consult with the Board prior to full productions in order to avoid situations where such finished materials are refused classification.

The following are of particular concern:

- negative stereotyping likely to lead to general anger & resentment or incite disaffection amongst ethnic groups
- graphic rape or torture sadistic violence or terrorization,
- illegal and glamorised drug use,
- material likely to incite ethnic or racial hatred or violence,
- portrayals of children in a sexualised or abusive context,
- material likely to be found criminal or obscene by the courts.

Appeals

A presenter or distributor who disagrees with a censorship or classification decision for their work may appeal against it directly to the Board. Additionally, members of the public may appeal decision reached by the Board with regards to the classification decision.

Violence

Whilst violence has always been a feature of entertainment for children and adults, the Board addresses the degree and nature of violence through our classification system and the need to protect children from imitable scenes. These facts of real life have made more difficult the problem of maintaining a balance in the showing of contrived violence in entertainment films. Violence has always been part of drama and even sports from time immemorial: what concerns the Board is the degree to which it is depicted in a film, and also whether it is gratuitous or not. Therefore, in classifying movies censorship officers are mindful that lower classification categories do not contain scenes which have the following:

- Portrayal of violence as a normal solution to problems,
- heroes who inflict pain and injury callousness towards victims,
- encouraging aggressive attitudes taking pleasure in pain or humiliation.

It is important to note however, that works which tend to glorify, glamorise or sexualise violence will receive a more restrictive classification and may even be cut or refused classification. No gratuitous violence will be allowed regardless of the category.

Children's materials (e.g. Westerns and Cartoons), it can be objectively argued, have traditionally depicted violence. Provided that such violence is far enough removed from reality that it does not frighten children or invite ready imitation, it can be tolerated. The general experience has been that children are more seriously disturbed by violence threatened or perpetrated against those (including animals) who are helpless or are clearly unable to escape.

Imitable techniques

Because of a natural tendency to copy adult behaviour without consideration of broader social implications, children are normally the people who are likely to be badly affected by violence in films. Such effects extend to teenagers but hopefully to a lesser extent. Therefore, the Board is concerned about detailed portrayal of criminal and violent techniques and the glamorization of easily accessible weapons. Action which may promote illegal or anti-social behaviour, and portrayals of potentially dangerous behaviour which young children are likely to copy, are of particular concern. Censorship officers must examine and

classify a film having in mind the degree to which a young person can be exposed to depictions of violence without being tempted to emulate them.

Traditional Rituals & Customs

The NFVCB recognizes that there are certain customs and traditions, some of which may be animist in origins which are practiced widely in Nigeria and some other African countries. These "rituals or Customs" are not necessarily seen in a negative light, but its depiction or portrayal in some movies give the Board cause for concern. Whilst the Board recognizes the right for filmmakers to depict some of these rituals in movies it must be done in good taste, and reflect the context of the story, and not be gratuitous or glamorize such acts.

Drugs

No work taken as a whole may promote or encourage the use of illegal drugs, smoking, alcohol abuse or substance misuse particularly at the junior categories. Any detailed portrayal of drug use likely to promote or glamorise the activity may be cut or refused classification altogether.

▶ "18"



Not suitable for persons under the age of 18 years

This is a legally restrictive classification. No one under the age of 18 years may be allowed to watch such a film in a cinema or rent such a video or DVD. There are no restrictions on themes or classifiable elements with respect to films classified "18", with or without accompanying consumer information.

In line with our guiding philosophy and democratic tenets, the Board believes that adults over 18 years should be free to decide what they wish to watch or not, within the law. However, there are exceptions, where the Board will have to make interventions when it believes that certain materials that would ordinarily attract 18 classifications are likely to cause harm to individuals, incite public disorder. Moreover, such films SHALL NOT contain scenes of child pornography, explicit violent sexual conduct, bestiality, explicit sexual conduct, or any act which degrades a person and which constitutes incitement to cause harm, the explicit infliction of extreme violence, or explicit sexual conduct involving sexual intercourse with visual presentation of the genitals or anal regions.



RE: Restricted Exhibition.

To be exhibited and distributed only in specially licensed premises. The 'RE' category is a special and legally restricted classification category. A film is to be classified as Restricted where the film, in the opinion of the Board, is not suitable for viewing by persons less than 18 years of age because the film contains frequent use of any of the following:

- brutal or graphic violence;
- intense horror;
- graphic sexual scenes;
- Other disturbing content.

▶ "15"

This is a legally restrictive classification. No child under the age of 15 years may be allowed to watch such a film in a cinema or rent such a video or DVD.



Theme	The film may deal with a variety of themes, including adult themes or social and psychological issues. Themes are handled sensitively and in a manner appropriate to the development of teenagers. Outcomes are generally positive, and viewers aged 15 years and older will be able to understand them.
Language	There may be some strong language appropriate to plot or part of character development. There may also be language, including mild sexual humour that reflects anti-social values within context as part of plot and character development but is not of a demeaning nature.
Drugs	There may be scenes of drug abuse. But these occur in context and with a positive outcome, such scenes should be without instructive detail and should not glamorize drugs.
Prejudice	Some scenes showing bias or negative stereotyping may occur. But these are within the context of the story and the outcome is positive. Human rights values are reinforced.
Nudity	Some scenes of nudity may occur within the context of the story or character development. Nudity is not used for exploitative purposes.
Sex	There may be brief scenes of simulated sexual activity. But they are related to the development of plot, theme or character. There is no suggestion of abuse, violence or exploitation in such scenes.
Violence	Scenes of realistic and intense violence should be brief and infrequent. Such realistic violence should be interrogated in a pro-social manner and shown as negative, hurtful, wrong and destructive. Violence based on prejudice should be mild and resolved in a way that supports human rights values. Violence should neither be glamorised nor presented as a way to solve conflicts.

Guidelines contents and use

The following guidelines aim to be as objective as possible, while retaining the flexibility needed to accommodate notions of artistic freedom, merit, community standards and culture. The Guidelines contain descriptions of each of the classification categories and are based on the NFVCB Act, the National Film Policy and the cumulative experience of the Board and various stakeholders Act. The categories indicate the most suitable audience for the film, in terms of age and legal restriction. Each classification category contains a list of the criteria used by the Board when making classification decisions. These criteria relate to the classifiable elements of violence, sex, coarse language, adult themes, drug use and nudity.

In considering each element, the Censorship Committee's classification decision is based on the impact of individual elements and their cumulative effect. The context and treatment of elements contribute to the impact. The Committee also takes into account factors such as tone, duration, frequency and the amount of visual or verbal detail. The relationship of classifiable elements to the narrative also contributes to the impact of a film, and therefore its classification. In describing classification criteria, the Guidelines sometimes use language which can be interpreted in a number of ways. To clarify the way words are used in the Guidelines, a glossary of terms is included.

Even though, the majority of movies produced in Nigeria are largely distributed directly through video to consumers, with very little going to the exhibition window; the Board should still take into consideration two formats for classification: public exhibition format, intended for screening in cinemas and theatres and home entertainment format, which includes videos, DVDs and other titles on discs. Classification of a title in one format will not apply to the same title in another, different format. A classification decision also takes into account the difference in the effect or impact of classifiable elements between watching a film in the cinema and the same film in the privacy of one's home. The interactive nature of a video or DVD, allowing one to play particular scenes over and over again, is also a factor that, while not determinative, may influence a classification decision. This would be the case particularly where scenes of instructive details in criminal techniques are included in the film.

As much as practically possible the censorship committee aims to carry out its tasks through appropriate use of the classification categories after a thorough examination of the movies presented, particularly in order to protect children from actual or potential harm, preserve community standards, culture and national security. However, the censorship committee may recommend certain cuts, or edits, which may be aimed at fitting the movie into a certain classification category as sought by the distributor, or to remove materials which are likely to cause or incite religious, ethnic, or social strife, or may ridicule any section of the community. The Board's approach to refusing classification must be clearly spelt out, and be based on the legal statues establishing the NFVCB.

Importance of context

The Censorship committee should always take into consideration in reaching decision on classification, the Context of the film or video works. This is crucial in determining whether a classifiable element is justified by the story-line or themes.

The classifiable elements: The six classifiable elements in a film or video works are:

- Themes
- Violence
- Sex and nudity
- Fetish voodoo
- Language
- Drug use
- Nudity

The classification takes account of the context and impact of each of these elements, including their frequency and intensity, and their cumulative effect. It also takes account of the purpose and tone of a sequence, and how material is treated. Assessing the impact of material requires considering not only the treatment of individual classifiable elements but also their cumulative effect. It also requires considering the purpose and tone of a sequence.

12 & 12A

This is a legally restrictive classification. No child under the age of 12 years may be allowed to watch such a film in a cinema, buy or rent such a video or DVD. Material classified 12 deals with issues or contains depictions which require a mature perspective. This is because the impact of individual elements or a combination of elements is considered likely to be harmful or disturbing to viewers under 12 years of age.



Theme	Mature and complex themes are acceptable, but their treatment must be suitable for young teenagers and outcomes should reinforce positive social values. The overall message is reassuring to a child's sense of security and well being
Language	There may be infrequent strong language (swear-words, threats, abuse or prejudice) occurring within the context of the story. Any sexual innuendo will be outside the understanding of a child. Words that constitute verbal abuse may occur infrequently and in a comedic context.
Drugs	There are no scenes condoning, promoting, glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. Brief scenes of drug use may occur within the context of the story but without instructional detail. Scenes interrogate effects of drug abuse and discourage it.
Prejudice	Issues of race, gender and other expressions of intolerance are resolved in a way that shows respect for the inherent dignity of every individual and/or group and may be understood be even young children.. If bias or negative stereotyping occurs, it is resolved within the context of the story. The overall message supports human rights values.
Nudity	Nudity may be allowed but in a non-sexual context. And should be few and brief scenes, without lingering close-ups.
Sex	Sexual activity may be implied. Sex references may reflect what is likely to be familiar to most adolescents but should not go beyond what is suitable for them. Such scenes of implied sexual activity must be necessary for the development of the plot, character or theme. However, such scenes are few and without close-ups or suggestive audio effects.
Imitable techniques	Dangerous techniques (eg combat techniques, hanging, suicide and self-harming) should not dwell on imitable detail or appear pain or harm free. Easily accessible weapons should not be glamorised
Horror	Sustained moderate threat and menace are permitted., but should be brief and few scenes
Violence	Violence should be mild and form an integral part of the plot or character development. Violence must not dwell on detail. There should be no emphasis on injuries or blood. There are no prolonged or extreme images of violence, such as close-up and graphic shots of people suffering either physically or emotionally as a result of violent acts or accidents. Films, including animation, must show in a direct way the negative consequences of intentional violence.

“PG” Parental Guidance

(Please note that “Parental guidance” is generally recommended for persons under 16 years)
This is an advisory category and is not legally restrictive. The object of this classification category is to warn parents that the film contains some material that might confuse or upset some younger children who watch it alone. While the film is judged suitable for children, parents are advised to monitor the contents, either by finding out more about the film or by watching it with their children. Material classified PG will not be harmful or disturbing to children. Parents may choose to preview the material for their children; some may choose to watch the material with their children. Others might find it sufficient to be accessible during or after the viewing to discuss the content.



Theme	No themes are treated in a way that might threaten a child's sense of security or well being. Supernatural or mythical themes, such as African traditional and cultural ceremonies may be included. The treatment of more serious issues such as domestic violence can be treated but should be discreet and mild in impact nothing in their treatment should condone negative social behavior. More disturbing themes will not be tolerated under the PG category.
Language	Mild language only.
Drugs	There are no scenes condoning, promoting, glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.
Prejudice	Issues of race, gender, and other expressions of intolerance must be resolved in a manner which shows respect for the inherent dignity of every individual and/or group treated in a way that would be understood by even young children. If the film contains any prejudice or negative stereotyping, the context makes it clear that such prejudice is wrong.
Nudity	There may be brief scenes of nudity in non-sexual contexts.
Horror	Frightening sequences should not be prolonged or intense. Fantasy settings may be a mitigating factor.
Sex	Sexual activity may be suggested, but even then should be brief scenes, infrequent, and not gratuitous. All verbal references to sexual activity should be discreet. There are no close ups and no frontal nudity in the implied sexual scenes
Violence	There may be brief scenes of low-impact violence but no prolonged or extreme images (eg. a victim suffering, graphic close ups, long shoot outs). The film shows that violence has consequences. People who commit violence are punished or suffer remorse. The final outcome is positive. There may be mild threats, menace or suspense. Scenes of stronger violence occur only in clearly contextualised comic, historical, fantastical or natural disaster settings. Fear-inducing dialog should not cause discomfort or distress.

Impact may be higher where a scene:

- contains greater detail, including the use of close-ups and slow motion
- uses accentuation techniques, such as lighting, perspective and resolution
- uses special effects, such as lighting and sound, resolution, colour, size of image, characterization and tone
- is prolonged
- is repeated frequently
- is realistic, rather than stylised
- encourages interactivity.

*** Interactivity includes the use of incentives and rewards, technical features and competitive intensity.*

As a general rule: - material that contains drug use and sexual violence related to incentives or rewards will be Refused Classification.

Impact may be lessened where reference to a classifiable element is verbal rather than visual. For example, a verbal reference to sexual violence is generally of less impact than a visual depiction. Also, some visual impacts have less impact than others: for example, an incidental depiction may have less impact than a direct one.

In arriving at classification or censorship decision, the Board has instituted three types of panels, and each serves a different purpose as follows:

Zonal Censorship Committee

This panel is made up of staff members of the Board at the zonal level and may include representatives of other agencies such as the National Broadcasting Commission, Nigerian Copyright Commission, as well as representatives of various state governments within the zone. Decisions reached at this level are subject to another committee at the National level at Headquarters, the Verification Panel. The zonal censorship committee may issue a provincial classification decision on the film or video works to the applicant which is however subject to final verification by the Verification Panel at the Board's HQ.



Verification Panel

This panel reviews the decisions reached by the zonal censorship committee. The role of verification panel is to ensure that the zonal censorship committee decision is consistent with the guidelines set out, and to look out for movies which although may be passed in one geographical zone may likely inflame passions in other geo-political zones.

Review Panel

This panel is requested and paid for by the producer/presenter or distributor who is dissatisfied with the Board's decision. It consists of eight Members who have not yet seen the film in question. The review committee decision shall be by majority vote, with the chairman having a second or casting vote in the event of tie in votes. The appeal panel's decision is final.

Classification Categories

GENERAL

This is a category which is considered suitable for all viewers. A film classified as 'General' should be suitable for children of school going age. However, the G classification symbol does not necessarily indicate that the film is one that children will enjoy. Some G films contain themes or story-lines that are of no interest to children.

The intent of the G classification is that parents should feel confident that children can watch material in this classification without supervision. Material classified G will not be harmful or disturbing to children. Whether or not the film is intended for children, the treatment of themes and other classifiable elements will be careful and discreet. All films classified under this category should be set within a positive moral framework and should offer reassuring counterbalances to any violence, threat or horror.



Theme	Treatment of problematic themes must be sensitive and appropriate for a younger audience. No themes are treated in a way that might threaten a child's sense of security or well being. The film should not be concerned with serious or moral issues which might confuse or disturb a young child.
Language	No strong language (swear words, threats, abuse, profanity, or prejudice). Mild language may occur infrequently and within context.
Context	In overall terms, the film should be within the comprehension of a child and good and bad should be balanced in a positive way.
Drugs	There are no scenes condoning, promoting, glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco unless there is a clear educational purpose or clear anti-drug message suitable for the audience.
Prejudice	If the film contains any prejudice or negative stereotyping, the context makes it clear that such prejudice is wrong. The issue is resolved in a way that both supports human rights values and can be understood by even young children.
Nudity	If nudity occurs at all, it is brief and in a non-sexual context.
Sex	There are no scenes of sexual activity beyond brief kissing.
Imitable techniques	No emphasis on realistic or easily accessible weapons. No potentially dangerous behaviour which young children are likely to copy.
Horror	Horror effects should be mild and brief and should take account of the presence of very young viewers. The outcome should be reassuring.
Violence	If any violence is present, it should be mild, perhaps comedic or cartoon-style, and there will be a complete absence of any serious threat, menace, blood or imitable techniques.

Classification Criteria

Once a film or video work has passed the major censorship criteria, the next step is determining what age group the material is suitable for. In classifying films, and video works, the NFVCB shall as much as possible give consideration to the following basic principles, also gives consideration to the following basic principles:

- adults should as far as possible be free to choose what they see, providing that it remains within the law and is not potentially harmful to society
- works should be allowed to reach the widest audience that is appropriate for their theme and treatment
- The context in which something (eg sex or violence) is presented is central to the question of its acceptability
- the NFVCB's Guidelines will be reviewed periodically. The Guidelines, and the Board's practice in applying them, have particular regard to changes in public taste, attitudes and concerns; changes in the law; or new evidence from research or expert sources

Classification Symbols

ALL films that are supplied to the public must be labeled with the approved classification symbol as well as the short synopsis of the movie, as submitted to the Board. The Board logo must be on :

- on video cassettes
- on VCD and DVD cases, as well as the discs
- as part of film trailers and advertising material such as posters

Film labels are colour coded, much the same as traffic lights:

- **GREEN** means anyone can view a film
- **YELLOW** means that anyone can view the film, but the film may contain material, such as violence or sexual themes, which may offend or upset some people. Parental guidance is advised before children view the film.
- **ORANGE, BLUE, RED & BLACK** means that the film is legally restricted and can only be viewed by the audience specified.

All labels have a rating or classification symbol and usually a descriptive note briefly explaining the content of the film, for example whether the film contains



Specific Censorship & Classification Guidelines

1. Films shall be classified separately in the following formats :
 - a. 35 mm, video,
 - b. DVD,
 - c. VCD.

A separate classification shall be applied for in each of the said formats and a classification in one format shall not apply to a different format.

2. Every movie is seen as a whole, and not a part to another movie either as its sequel or prequel. The classification decision for a movie should be based completely on the individual impact and characteristics of each film or video.
3. An applicant for classification of a film or video work whether foreign or local, in a particular format shall furnish, to the satisfaction of the Board, confirmation of her or his right to distribute and/or exhibit the film in that format in Nigeria. In the absence of satisfactory confirmation of such distribution and/or exhibition rights, the Board may refuse to classify the film in that particular format and may revoke any certificate of classification with may have been issued with respect to that film in that format.
4. Furthermore, all presenters must show evidence of all music synchronization rights used in the movie.
5. For every work passed, the Board provides information about the content of the movie, which indicates why it has been given a particular category and what it contains by way of language, nudity or sex, fetish practice, violence, bad language, etc. This Consumer Advice is an important aspect of the classification systems worldwide which enables them to make informed decisions about viewing.
6. In line with international practice, and indeed to stem rising incidence of indecent movie trailers, the Board decisions would be more restrictive with regard to trailers and advertisements. This is because difficult content in such short works have a greater impact on an unprepared audience, and due to the increased possibility of under-age viewing.



7. Classification decisions may be stricter on video, DVD and digital works than on 35mm films meant for exhibition directly. This is because of the increased possibility of under-age viewing. Accordingly, a video work may occasionally receive a higher age classification than on film, or require new or different cuts.

Consumer Information Advisories

The Board shall provide reliable Consumer Advice on all the works it classifies, as the advisories alert consumers to the elements that have contributed to the classification. It helps people to make informed choices about the films and videos they choose for themselves or for their children.

Therefore, along with a classification, most films will be assigned an advisory: this is a short information piece that lists specific content factors in the film. It covers in particular violence, sex, nudity, rituals, language, drugs and any other matters likely to be of concern to the public. The information should appear on publicity for all films, including music videos, rated 'G' to '18', and on the packaging of all videos. Consumer advice is designed to provide information to consumers as to the theme and nature of the material they are about to buy or watch.

In determining the appropriate advisory, the primary consideration is the material in the film that played a determinative role in the film's classification; this will be listed first, followed by other content factors where relevant. A typical advisory will warn on such factors as "violence" or "sexually suggestive scenes." Parents should be aware that the advisory does not necessarily capture all material in the film. Some examples of consumer advice are:

- Mild violence
- Moderate violence, including scenes depicting rituals, fetish sacrifices, etc.
- Frequent coarse or strong language
- Suggested or Strong drug use
- Medium Level Animated Violence
- Simulated sex scenes

18: A film is to be classified as 18 where the film, in the opinion of the Board, is suitable for viewing by persons over 18 years of age but not for persons under 18 years of age because the film may contain any of the following:

- (a) explicit violence;
- (b) frequent coarse language;
- (c) horror; or ritual scenes
- (d) simulated sexual activity.

RE: A film is to be classified as Restricted Exhibition where the film, in the opinion of the Board, is not suitable for viewing by persons under 18 years of age because the film contains frequent use of any of the following:

- (a) brutal or graphic violence;
- (b) intense horror;
- (c) sexual scenes;
- (d) other disturbing content.



Classification Symbols

The following are the new classification categories; these range from "G" suitable for all ages, to "18" materials that the Board has adjudged to be not suitable for anyone under the age of 18 years. The G and "PG" categories are advisory only, whilst the other categories are legally restrictive. This means that it is illegal to allow a child younger than the given age restriction to see the film or hire the film from a video outlet.

G: A film is to be classified as General if the content is considered by the Board to be suitable for viewing by persons of all ages.

PG: A film is to be classified as Parental Guidance where the themes or content of the film may not, in the opinion of the Board, be suitable for all children.

12 & 12A: A film is to be classified 12 where in the opinion of the Board the themes or content of the film is Suitable for persons 12 years and over; and No-one younger than 12 may see a '12A' film in a cinema unless accompanied by an adult. No-one younger than 12 may rent or buy a '12' rated video or DVD. as the film contains any of the following:

- (a) violence
- (b) coarse language
- (c) sexually suggestive scenes

15: A film to be classified as 15 where the film or video work, is in the opinion of the Board suitable only for persons 15 years and over. No-one younger than 15 may see a '15' film in a cinema. No-one younger than 15 may rent or buy a '15' rated video or DVD, as the film contains any of the following elements:

- (a) strong themes
- (b) coarse language,
- (c) horror or ritual scenes
- (d) sexually suggestive scenes



Symbols



G



PG



12



12A



15



18



RE

CENSORSHIP & CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINE

	GENERAL VIEWING
	PARENTAL GUIDANCE REQUIRED
	FOR PERSONS 12 YEARS
	FOR PERSONS 12 YEARS (Must be accompanied by an Adult)
	FOR PERSONS 15 YEARS AND ABOVE
	MATURED AUDIENCE
	RESTRICTED EXHIBITION

Advisory Notes

CENSORSHIP & CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINE