

Editorial Policy



Guidance Note

The Use of Stills Photographs and Images

This guidance supplements the BBC's Editorial Guidelines (which can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines), by offering specific advice for those who will be commissioning, editing and releasing images on behalf of the BBC.

In cases of doubt, further advice can be sought from the duty Editorial Policy Adviser by telephoning however, the final decision on the issue of an image rests with the relevant editorial figure.

Legal issues regarding images should be referred to the relevant BBC legal department.

All Guidance Notes can be found at edpol.gateway.bbc.co.uk/guidance_notes.shtml (BBC internal link) or www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/advice/.

Introduction

Images should be appropriate for all audiences and suitable for display both within BBC environments and on any platforms (print and digital) where BBC content may appear. Images should maintain the integrity of the BBC, its programmes, and any talent or contributors appearing in them.

Accuracy, Impartiality and Fairness (Chapters 3, 4 & 5)

- The BBC strives to be fair to all – fair to those we feature or portray in images and fair to our audiences.
- Any digital manipulation, including the use of CGI or other production techniques (such as Photoshop) to create or enhance scenes or characters, should not distort the meaning of events, alter the impact of genuine material or otherwise seriously mislead our audiences. Care should be taken to ensure that images of a real event reflect the event accurately.

- Any proposal to substantially change an image of a presenter through digitally manipulation must be approved by the relevant senior editorial figure.
- Sets of images that represent a programme which requires the audience to vote should include every eligible contestant/organisation or none at all. The BBC should not be seen to endorse one competitor over another over the cause of a campaign.
- Images representing an international sporting event such as Six Nations Rugby or the Cricket World Cup should be mindful of all UK teams involved.
- Images representing an investigative report about products, companies or services should be selected with special care and in conjunction with the programme producer or Programme Legal Advise where appropriate. For example if the report is about a particular product, e.g. 'x' brand of organic milk, then it is appropriate to show that product in isolation and not in juxtaposition with other similar products. If the report is about organic milk, then it is more appropriate to show a collection of organic milk rather than single one out.

Contributors, Consent and Privacy (Chapters 5 & 6)

- Clear consent must be obtained from vulnerable contributors. If images are re-used after a publicity campaign, consent should be re-visited via the relevant programme producer or contributor.
- Care should be taken over identifying features such as car number plates or house numbers.
- Images must not contain children or young people's presenters or children or young people in inappropriate situations.
- Written permission must be gained from actors who are depicted in a state of nudity. Careful editorial consideration must be made before releasing any images of actors in a state nudity.
- Care should be taken not to undermine the reputations of contributors
- Contributors who need to be anonymous in the programme must remain anonymous in the images. The programme producer should be consulted before any such images are released.

Crime and Anti-social behaviour (Chapter 7)

- Care should be taken when selecting images showing contributors using illegal substances e.g. smoking cannabis which can result in criminal investigation for the contributors.
- Images of sex offenders who have served their sentences may only be released if the police have decided to release this information to the general public. **Any proposal to release images of paedophiles or sex offenders who have not been named by the police must be referred to the Controller Editorial Policy.**

Harm and Offence (Chapter 8)

All images must comply with BBC's Editorial Guidelines on Harm and Offence (www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/edguide/harm/).

Images should not normally feature the following:

- Graphic violence, torture, or any extreme violent behaviour.
- Gratuitous nudity or graphic/extreme sexual acts.
- Images depicting children (under the age of sixteen) in a sexual context.
- Explicit drug use.
- Self-harm, suicide, or attempted suicide.
- Hangings or other forms of execution.

Any proposal to features any of these acts should be discussed with Editorial Policy.

Images featuring the following should be selected with special care and with editorial justification.

- Images showing adult behaviours such as smoking, drinking, gambling and drug use.
- Images seen to be encouraging or glamorising harmful or illegal behaviours.
- Images that reinforce prejudicial perspectives or depict groups in stereotypical ways.

- Images containing knives, guns, or weaponry of any kind. Particular care must be taken when picturing the use of weapons. Images in particular showing the use of a gun or knife must be edited carefully.
- Images portraying dead or dying humans
- Images showing scenes of physical abuse.
- Images showing hypnotism
- Images that could be seen as offensive to ethnic, religious or minority groups.
- Images that could be considered offensive to those with disabilities or mental health conditions
- Images featuring activities or stunts that could cause children or young people to imitate dangerous behaviour

Tragic Events

- Images selectors should be aware of events that may cause distress to some users. Special care should be taken when selecting images of significant events outside of a news context.
- When the aftermath of a tragic event requires scheduling changes in television and radio, we should consider whether associated images are still appropriate for release and, where necessary, withdraw inappropriate images already released to avoid offence.

Safety

Images should comply with [BBC health and safety guidelines](http://home.gateway.bbc.co.uk/myrisks/main.asp?page=4531)

(<http://home.gateway.bbc.co.uk/myrisks/main.asp?page=4531>). In particular:

- Presenters and contributors should be shown to be abiding the law and following health and safety guidelines e.g. wearing seat belts and using the appropriate mobile phone equipment when driving.
- Images should show presenters, children and young people wearing the correct protection gear if engaged in sports or leisure activities e.g. cycling helmets, rock climbing harnesses.

Political, Religious and topical sensitivities (Chapters 10 & 12)

Images should be mindful of the sensibilities of political, regional, ethnic, disabled and other minority groups. They must also protect the legal status of contributors and not endorse dangerous or antisocial behaviours. Care must be taken to ensure that:

- Images do not reinforce prejudicial perspectives or depict groups in stereotypical ways. When possible we should ensure a diverse range of ethnic groups is depicted in any image.
- Due care and consideration must be made regarding the use of religious symbols in images which may cause offence. The Prophet Mohammed must not be represented in any shape or form.
- There also should be an awareness of religious sensitivities about smoking, drinking and certain foods.
- Choice of images must reflect awareness of political sensitivities in the Nations and Regions. In particular the choice of colours and symbols such as:
 - Prominence of the colours Green and Orange (Northern Ireland/ Scotland (West)).
 - Combination of the following colours: Red/White/Blue, Green/White/Yellow and Green/White/Orange (Northern Ireland).
 - Visibility of shamrocks, flags or political banners (Northern Ireland).
 - Depiction of the four Nations in a map form must be geographically accurate.

Product Prominence (Chapter 13)

- We must never represent a product or service in images in return for cash, services or any consideration in kind. **This is product placement.**
- In images, no undue prominence should be given to any branded product or service unless editorially justified. The BBC and its presenters must never be seen to be endorsing or promoting any product or service. The appropriate action will be to remove any branding off the products in question i.e. clothes, food and bottle labels.

- Due care should be exercised with images of sports personalities who have endorsement deals. Such images should be presented to ensure that the BBC is not seen to be capitalising on this endorsement.

The Law (Chapter 16)

Images should comply with BBC legal requirements. Particular care should be taken with:

- Images that have the potential to be defamatory. These should be checked with Programme Legal Advice before being used, or should not be selected at all.
- Captions that accompany images must be factually correct. It is possible to defame people by juxtaposition of words and pictures.
- Careful consideration regarding captioning should also be made for images representing undercover documentaries and current affairs, or when children are involved. Surnames are generally avoided. The programme producer should be consulted about the appropriate level of information.
- Images relating to potential legal issues or court cases must be treated with great care. The programme producer and, where appropriate Programme Legal Advice, should be consulted. If images showing a contributor who is subject to a court hearing are released, the BBC could be held in contempt of court. Such images as these should be withdrawn from public access.

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