



BBC VISION GUIDANCE ON BEST PRACTICE FOR EDITORIAL STANDARDS & COMPLIANCE

BBC Vision has introduced the following guidance note on compliance for independent producers, which is being communicated to support the industry drive for excellence in editorial standards.

Maintaining trust with our audiences is of vital importance to the BBC. Our core values are impartiality, accuracy and editorial integrity and the license fee payer expects our output to embody those values. That in essence is what compliance means to the BBC.

As an independent producer for the BBC, you give us an important warranty; that the content you produce, including promotional content, conforms to BBC guidelines and in particular the Editorial Guidelines. Your executive producer at the BBC relies on that warranty in carrying out compliance on your programme. It's important that producers are aware of their responsibility for upholding our editorial standards, and also what happens if those standards aren't met.

This guidance is intended to help shape best practice in your own compliance processes and relationship to the BBC

1. Identify a senior figure within the company with overall responsibility for compliance issues. It should be made clear to all staff the importance of compliance and what their compliance responsibilities are. Ensure that key staff are familiar with the broadcaster's editorial guidelines.
2. On each project, identify the person responsible for compliance of the project in the company and the referral process to be followed, so that accountabilities are clear within your company.
3. At the outset of a BBC project, a meeting on compliance issues will be held with the BBC executive producer. This alerts all involved to the risks inherent in a production and sets down plans to deal with issues should they arise. You can download here the checklist used on BBC projects: http://.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/guidelines/compliance_conversation_checklist.pdf
4. Empower your executive producer and be clear about the interaction between the BBC executive producer and the executive producer within your company. You should be clear about the referral process back to the BBC for issues that arise. If risks change on a production, communicate that to your BBC executive producer in writing.
5. Companies may devise specific policies on frequently occurring issues or on regular shows.
6. If you identify gaps in knowledge or skills, explore training & guidance with the BBC, especially on long-running series. For BBC productions, Safeguarding Trust online training is mandatory: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/safeguardingtrust/>
7. Allow for the use of independent legal advice; or consider the services of an independent compliance consultant, particularly if the need is for advice in a specialist area.
8. Hold regular team meetings throughout production and encourage a culture of discussion of issues. Where appropriate, use the initial BBC checklist (http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/guidelines/compliance_conversation_checklist.pdf) as the basis of a compliance progress report to share with the BBC.
9. Make notes to record key editorial discussions, and keep them to be able to demonstrate that decisions have been taken carefully and in full knowledge of the facts.
10. Debrief at the end of a production, so that any learning can be applied to subsequent series or other projects.