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ABC Consumer Magazines Reporting Standards

This document details a change that has been agreed to the Reporting Standards for Consumer Magazines. You can view the updated ABC Reporting Standards on our [website](#).

Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact your ABC Account Manager, Charlotte Brown (charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk) or any member of the ABC team.

Repurposing of unsold retail copies – effective from January 2023

Introduction

With an increased focus on sustainability, there is a desire in the industry to address the issue of large volumes of unsold retail copies being sent for disposal or recycling.

This change to our Standards allows copies to be ‘repurposed’ – either sold or distributed to consumers and included in ABC circulations.

With effect from January 2023 repurposed copies will be eligible for inclusion in ABC circulations, subject to the conditions listed below, which are designed to ensure the quantities claimed are transparent and the reporting maintains value and credibility.

If you intend to take advantage of the ability to report repurposed unsold retail copies we recommend you contact us in advance to discuss the requirements and audit trail you’ll be providing to support your claim.

Current requirements:

You cannot include back issues in ABC circulation under retail multipacks, paid multiple copies or free circulation categories.

Change – available from January 2023

- You may claim repurposed unsold retail copies subject to the following time constraints:
 - For publications publishing fewer than 18 issues in a calendar year – issues up to 6 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution are allowable.
 - For publications publishing 18 or more issues in a calendar year – issues up to 3 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution are allowable.
- You may claim repurposed unsold retail print copies in the following categories:
 - Retail Sales – Multipack - Sold together with a copy (or copies) of a *different* publication(s).
 - At least one copy in the multipack must be the current issue.
 - Retail Sales - Multipack – Sold together with a current issue of *the same publication*.
 - The price paid for the Multipack must exceed the current issue’s cover price by at least:
 - 20% of the current issue’s cover price; or
 - £1 (whichever is the lower).
 - Paid Multiple Copies
 - Free Circulation – Controlled Free, Free Requested Delivered, Non-Controlled Free, Monitored Free, Free Letterbox
 - Copies will be reported as Sample Free according to existing criteria in the relevant circulation category.
- The level of repurposed unsold retail copies claimed will be reported as follows:
 - As a percentage of the average circulation reported for the audit period.
 - Those claimed in retail Multipacks as a percentage of the Actively Purchased circulation reported for the audit period.

The Reporting Standards changes are shown below - shading denotes text added.

Retail Sales (Sale or Return) - Extract

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer to the retailer

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c) Multipacked (or banded) magazines

A magazine is defined for ABC purposes as being sold as part of a Multipack (i.e. where it is packaged or banded together as a unit with other issues or publications) only if two or more publications in that pack are included in an ABC circulation claim.

...

ii) Two or more publications claimed

- Sales of Multipacks must be separately and clearly identified on newstrade reports and documentation.
- If a magazine in the pack is a back issue (with the exception of repurposed copies – see below) or is at all promoted as 'free' then it cannot be claimed as a sold copy for ABC purposes

Note:

- If the publisher has removed the normal cover price from a publication (to prevent resale for example) or reduced the cover price for that issue the Basic Cover Price must still be applied for this purpose.
- For ABC rate classification purposes the Multipack price must be allocated to each magazine included in an ABC circulation claim on a pro-rata basis using their individual Basic Cover Prices.
- A free publication (or one promoted as free) included in the multipack may be eligible to be claimed under Monitored Free Distribution or Sample Free Distribution. Please refer to those sections for requirements and reporting. If a publication is claimed as a free copy within a retail multipack it must be detailed on the multipack breakout for the paid publication.

Repurposed unsold retail copies

Repurposed unsold retail copies are print copies supplied to wholesale/retail for retail sale, but which have been returned unsold and are subsequently sold or distributed in accordance with these standards. For the avoidance of doubt, these copies cannot be claimed more than once.

You may claim back issues of repurposed unsold print retail copies in a Multipack as follows:

- For publications publishing fewer than 18 issues in a calendar year – issues up to 6 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution.
- For publications publishing 18 or more issues in a calendar year – issues up to 3 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution.
- If the repurposed copy is sold together with a copy (or copies) of a different publication(s) then at least one copy in the Multipack must be the current issue.
- If the repurposed copy is sold in a Multipack together with a current issue of the same publication, then the price paid for the multipack must exceed the current issue's cover price by at least:
 - 20% of the current issue's cover price; or
 - £1 (whichever is the lower).
- The quantity of repurposed copies included in your claim must be reported – see the Reporting section below for details.

Reporting

You will report retail sales as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate (note: the term Full Rate will replace full or Basic Cover Price for reporting purposes):

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4. The issues that include copies sold as a part of a multipack must be reported, identifying the other publication(s) included in the multipack (only those that are themselves included in an ABC circulation claim - which could be as Retail Sale or Monitored/Sample Free) and the quantity and percentage of each issue's Paid Single Copies figure (total of retail sales and single copy sales) that is sold as part of a multipack.

a) If Multipacks have been claimed that include repurposed unsold retail copies, then you must:

- i) Report the level of repurposed Multipack copies claimed as a percentage of Actively Purchased circulation for the reporting period.
- ii) Combine the repurposed Multipack copies with any other repurposed copies in other categories and report the total as a percentage of the total average circulation for the reporting period.

Paid Multiple Copies/Controlled Free/Free Requested Delivered/Non-Controlled Free/Monitored Free/Free Letterbox - Extract

Requirements

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You cannot claim sales of back issues (with the exception of repurposed unsold retail copies – see below).

Repurposed unsold retail copies

Repurposed unsold retail copies are print copies supplied to wholesale/retail for retail sale, but which have been returned unsold and are subsequently sold or distributed in accordance with these standards. For the avoidance of doubt, these copies cannot be claimed more than once.

You may claim back issues of repurposed unsold print retail copies as follows:

- i) For publications publishing fewer than 18 issues in a calendar year – issues up to 6 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution.
- ii) For publications publishing 18 or more issues in a calendar year – issues up to 3 months old against the issue current at the time of sale/distribution.
- iii) The level of repurposed copies included in your claim must be reported – see the Reporting section below for details.

Reporting

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If you have claimed repurposed unsold retail copies, then you must combine the repurposed copies with any other repurposed copies in other categories and report the total as a percentage of the total average circulation for the reporting period.