

Help Note

Compulsory holiday insurance



CAP Help Notes offer guidance for non-broadcast marketing communications under the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotions and Direct Marketing (the CAP Code). For advice on the rules for TV or radio commercials, contact Clearcast www.clearcast.co.uk for TV ads or the RACC www.racc.co.uk for radio ads.

Background

These guidelines, drawn up by the Copy Advice team, are intended to help marketers, agencies and media interpret the rules in the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing as far as they relate to the subject discussed. They are based on previous ASA cases and neither constitute new rules nor bind the ASA Council in the event of a complaint about a marketing communication that follows them.

Many travel agents nowadays offer holiday deals that are conditional on taking out their holiday insurance. This requirement is not always stated in the marketing communication. If the requirement is stated, the likely cost of the insurance often is not. This non-disclosure of information causes frustration and annoyance to prospective holidaymakers, particularly if the insurance cost is higher than market rates. In some cases the cost of the insurance might add 40% or more to the marketed cost of the holiday. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in pricing means that consumers cannot make meaningful comparisons between offers.

The Code states:

Rule 3.18

"Quoted prices must include non-optional taxes, duties, fees and charges that apply to all or most buyers" and

Rule 3.21

"If the price of one product depends on another, marketing communications must make clear the extent of the commitment the consumer must make to obtain the advertised price". The Copy Advice team met ABTA to discuss how these principles should be applied to marketing communications quoting holiday prices that are subject to taking out compulsory insurance. As a result we have drawn up the following guidelines:

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1. If a marketed holiday is subject to the compulsory purchase of holiday insurance from the marketer, except as in 6, below, this condition should be stated. So, too, should the typical cost of the insurance. For example, "One week holiday in Paris £269 ... plus insurance, typically £32 per person".

 2. The typical insurance cost should be prominent so that it will be seen easily by the reader. If it is in a footnote, it should be linked to the basic price of the holiday by an asterisk.

 3. The typical insurance cost should be the premium payable by a person between the ages of 18 and 65 years old, in good health and holidaying for the marketed number of days at the advertised destination(s).

 4. If the marketing communication features various destinations and the typical insurance cost varies according to the destination, the typical cost for each destination, or group of destinations, should be given. This situation is likely to occur only if the marketing communication features destinations in more than one continent.

 5. If the marketing communication features holidays of different duration and the rate of insurance varies according to duration, either all typical costs or the most expensive cost relative to the duration should be given. For example, if the marketing communication features holidays of one and two week's duration and the typical insurance costs are £32 and £48, the marketing communication should state either both costs or just the cost of £32 for a week.

 6. Marketers may, if they wish, quote prices that include compulsory insurance, in which case they should state this and calculate the insurance element in accordance with 3, above.

Guidance

Advice on specific marketing communications is available from the Copy Advice team by telephone on 020 7492 2100, by fax on 020 7404 3404, or you can log a specific written enquiry via our online request form <http://www.copyadvice.org.uk/Ad-Advice/Bespoke-Copy-Advice.aspx>. The Copy Advice website at www.copyadvice.org.uk contains a full list of Help Notes as well as access to the AdviceOnline database, which has links through to relevant Code rules and ASA adjudications.

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