



A Guide to Controlled Free & Non-Controlled Free Circulation (Consumer Magazines)

Setting the standard

Introduction

Free magazines that are individually wrapped and addressed can be claimed under one of two circulation categories. This guide is designed to help you understand how to these claim copies either under the category 'Controlled Free Circulation' or 'Non-Controlled Free Circulation' on your consumer magazine certificate. If you would like further or more detailed advice, please contact your ABC Account Manager who will be pleased to help.

What is Controlled Free Circulation?

It relates to copies that are individually wrapped, addressed, sent free and posted free to individuals who meet the magazines specific Terms of Control (TOC).

There are six categories within Controlled Free Circulation these can be broadly split into three types:

Individually Requested: where an individual has personally requested the magazine either in writing, by telephone or via the internet.

Company Requested: where the request has been made on behalf of the individual by a colleague. The request was made either in writing, by telephone or via the internet.

Non-Requested: copies are sent to individuals on the basis of information from third party sources.

Terms of Control

Are the criteria you would create and use to determine whether or not a person is sent a free copy of the magazine.

The TOC appear on the circulation certificate – as evidence of controlled circulation quality for prospective advertisers and should not be published in the publication, on registration documents or promotional material.

Evidence that the addressee meets the TOC will need to be no more than 3 years old.

Audit documentation required for the six categories:

Includes:

- Mailing list
- Distribution evidence
- Request/source documentation

Please note that all request/source documentation for all categories of Controlled Circulation will need to be less than three years old at the date of distribution of the issue for which the mailing list is provided.

Individually Requested in Writing

A *signed and dated* request document/card proving that the addressee has explicitly requested to be sent a *regular free copy* of the title. This would normally be in the form of a box on the request document containing a statement similar to "Only sign below if you wish to receive a regular free copy of....." The demographics on the request document will need to prove that the addressee meets the registered Terms of Control. This would typically be from the answers to 'tick-box' questions.

Individually Requested by Telecommunication (incl. Fax, Internet, and e-mail)

A telephone request document (approved by us prior to use), signed and dated by the interviewer.

A question "Do you wish to receive regular free copies of.....?" will need to be asked, and the current ABC Personal Identifier Question (PIQ) (changed 1st January every year, the current PIQ can be found on the ABC website) will also be asked - and the answer recorded in order that the call can be verified at audit

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if sampled. The document will need to also contain sufficient information to prove that the addressee meets the Terms of Control, this again would typically be from the answers to 'tick-box' questions.

Company Requested in Writing

The requirements are similar to those for individually requested, except that the request document will be signed by an employee of the company, not necessarily the addressee. For example, a letter from the Managing Director of a company asking for regular free copies to be sent to a number of other named employees at the same company. The document will need to contain sufficient information to prove that the addressee meets the Terms of Control, this again would typically be from the answers to 'tick-box' questions.

Company Requested by Telecommunication

Requirements are similar to those for individually requested, except that the respondent need not be the addressee. Typically this could be a telephone call to one employee asking "Are there any of your colleagues to whom you would like us to send a regular free copy?" The PIQ will be asked of the individual spoken to. The document will need to also contain sufficient information to prove that the addressee meets the Terms of Control, this again would typically be from the answers to 'tick-box' questions

Non Requested By Name / Non Requested By Job Title

A magazine sent to an individual, by name or job title, who you can show meet the Terms of Control. In practice this would mean that some source documentation which proves this is available to the auditor. The Reporting Standards detail examples of Source documentation. If the job title is relevant to the Terms of Control the title this will need to be included in the list of addressees provided for the auditor.

What is Non-Controlled Free Circulation?

Free copies that are sent individually addressed, either to a person by name, or to a company or job title.

Audit documentation required

- Mailing list
- Distribution evidence

For details on how to claim free copies given away at exhibitions can be found in "A Guide to Consumer Magazines distributed free at exhibitions and events"

How To Get More Information

The Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards are available from the ABC website www.abc.org.uk. If you need to discuss any aspect of ABC please contact an ABC Account Manager (01442 870800)

This outline is intended as a brief user-friendly guide to the topic. It is not intended as a replacement for, or interpretation of, the relevant ABC Reporting Standards. In all cases where this guide and the Reporting Standards differ, the Reporting Standards will prevail.