

How will I know if a programme contains product placement?

If a UK programme contains product placement, the TV channel has to show a special logo. This will let viewers know that the TV channel or the programme-maker has been paid to include products in that programme.

The two versions of the logo look like this:



The logo has to be shown at the beginning of the programme, and repeated after any advertising break during the programme. It also has to be shown again at the end of the programme.

TV channels don't have to show the logo on programmes that were originally broadcast outside the UK (for example, a US drama series that is then shown in the UK). Any programme that is made to be shown in an Ofcom licensed channel, including those broadcast outside of the UK, must include the product placement logo where necessary.

Where can I find out more?

Ofcom's rules for product placement can be found at: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/broadcast-codes/broadcast-code/>

Guidance on the meaning and use of these rules can be found at: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/guidance/programme-guidance/bguidance/>.

What if I think the rules have been broken?

You can find out how to complain to Ofcom here: <http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/tell-us/tv-and-radio/>



Ofcom Advisory Team

Phone: +44 (0)300 123 3333
Facsimile: +44 (0)300 123 0811
Textphone: +44 (0)300 123 2024
Welsh Line: +44 (0)300 123 2023

www.ofcom.org.uk



Product placement is allowed in UK television programmes from 28 February 2011. Ofcom is responsible for the rules governing product placement, including what can and can't be shown on TV screens. The following gives an overview of these rules and explains how you can tell whether a programme contains product placement.

What is product placement?

Product placement is when a company pays a TV channel or a programme-maker to include its products or brands in a programme.

So, for example, a fashion company might pay for a presenter to wear its clothes during a programme, or a car manufacturer might pay for a character to mention one of its cars in a scene in a drama.

Is it allowed in the UK?

Product placement in films and international programmes (such as US drama series) has been allowed on UK television for many years.

From 28 February 2011 TV programmes made for UK audiences can contain product placement as long as they comply with Ofcom's rules.

These rules apply to all programmes broadcast on channels licensed by Ofcom and include some channels that broadcast outside of the UK.

Does this mean that all products I see in a programme made after this date have been paid for?

No, programme-makers also use 'props' (for example, to 'dress' a set in a TV soap).

The difference between product placement and the use of props is that the TV channel and the programme-maker don't receive any payment for including props. They pay to use them or get them free, rather than being paid to include them, so they're not product placement.

It's also possible that a product could appear in a programme by chance, not because the company has paid for it to be included – for instance, a member of the public interviewed in the street might be wearing clothing that shows a company's logo.

What are the rules for product placement?

Ofcom's Broadcasting Code contains rules about **what** type of products can be placed in programmes, **where** product placement is allowed, and **how** placed products can be featured. These rules are required by both European and UK law.

Which programmes can contain product placement?

Product placement is allowed in films (including dramas and documentaries), TV series (including soaps), entertainment shows and sports programmes.

Where can't products be placed?

Products cannot be placed in news or children's programmes. They also cannot be placed in religious, current affairs and consumer advice programmes made for UK audiences.

Will there be product placement on the BBC?

Under the terms of the BBC Agreement product placement is not allowed in programmes made for BBC licence fee funded services.

However, Ofcom's rules apply to any product placement in programmes which the BBC acquires from elsewhere and those made by the BBC's commercial TV services.

What products can't be placed?

Cigarettes and other tobacco products, along with medicines that are available only on prescription, can't be product placed in any programmes.

Alcoholic drinks, gambling products, all other types of medicines, food and drink that is high in fat, salt, or sugar and baby milk can't be product placed in UK programmes.

Also, products that can't be advertised (such as guns and other weapons) can't be product placed in UK programmes either.

How can products be placed?

There must be 'editorial justification' for a product to be placed in a programme. That means the product must be relevant to what the programme is about. The content of programmes shouldn't seem to be created or distorted, just to feature the placed products.

Programmes also can't promote placed products or give them too much prominence. So there shouldn't be any claims made about how good a placed product is, or so many references to a product that it feels like it is being promoted.