

# Model 'no buy' list criteria could dramatically reduce youth exposure to TV alcohol ads

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A set of "no buy" list criteria developed by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health could greatly reduce underage viewers' exposure to alcohol advertising on cable TV, a new study finds. "No-buy" lists refer to lists of television programming that advertisers avoid in order to comply with self-regulatory marketing guidelines.

The new report, in the January issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, found that from 2005 through 2012 youth were exposed more than 15 billion times to [alcohol ads](#) on television, most of them on cable, that were not in compliance with the [alcohol](#) industry's self-regulatory advertising placement guidelines. The paper outlines a new set of "no buy" list criteria that would eliminate almost all of this non-compliant advertising exposure.

The new set of "no buy" list criteria recommends avoiding ad placements on programs that were previously non-compliant and during times of day when television audiences skew young (like late night). The criteria also recommend being more selective about ad placements on low-rated cable shows.

Excessive alcohol drinking is blamed for 4,300 deaths a year for people under age 21 and is a risk factor among the top three leading causes of death for this age group (accidents, suicide and homicide). At least 14 long-term studies have found that the more underage audiences are exposed to alcohol advertising and marketing, the more likely they are to drink, or if they are already drinking, to drink more. From 2005 through 2012, the alcohol industry spent \$7.5 billion on more than two million television ads.

"Even when parents set reasonable limits for their

children's screen time, kids are still being exposed to a staggering number of ads for a product they are not allowed to purchase," says study author David Jernigan, PhD, director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "Our findings offer a blueprint for reducing youth exposure to [alcohol advertising](#) within the current self-regulatory advertising environment."

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has long recommended "no buy" lists. In its 1999 review of the advertising practices of the [alcohol industry](#), the FTC endorsed "no buy" lists of media that were popular with underage audiences.

"By developing specific 'no buy' list criteria, our method offers alcohol advertisers a simple and economically feasible solution to improve compliance with their own guidelines," says lead author Craig Ross, PhD, a research assistant professor of epidemiology at Boston University and a CAMY consultant.

**More information:** CAMY plans to issue quarterly reports that assess non-complaint alcohol advertising on cable TV based on the "no buy" list criteria and how this non-compliance varies by program, cable network and daypart. The first report, Alcohol Advertising Compliance on Cable Television, 1st Quarter 2015, is available under embargo. It will be available on [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org) on Jan. 13, 2016.

Ross, C. S., Brewer, R. D., & Jernigan, D. H. (January 2016). The potential impact of a "no-buy" list on youth exposure to alcohol advertising on cable television. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 77(1), 7-16.

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corner: The role of public health surveillance in protecting young people from alcohol marketing. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 77(1), 5-6.

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