

# **VOLUNTARY CODE FOR THE ADVERTISING AND MARKETING OF ALCOHOL BEVERAGES AND THE LABELLING OF ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTAINERS**

Enacted 9 December 1988  
Final Amendment 1 July 2016  
By the Japan Liquor Industry Council

## **I. Basic Principles**

1. Since alcohol beverages have the characteristic of being an intoxicating beverage, those who are involved in the production, marketing and selling of alcohol beverages need to accept the social responsibility of fostering environments for appropriate drinking while preventing illegal activities such as underage drinking and drunk driving.
2. With a perspective of responding to such societal needs, the alcohol industry has been complying with laws, rules and regulations regarding advertising and marketing of alcohol beverages and labelling of alcohol beverage containers. In addition, the industry has developed and been abiding by a “Voluntary Code for Advertising and Marketing” as its own standard of compliance. As the Industry acknowledges the recent environmental change surrounding alcohol beverages, it is necessary to further respond to the needs of society through constant review of the voluntary codes in order to support a healthy development of the business while ensuring greater product benefit to consumers.
3. While the code should be implemented with an understanding and empathy of consumers, the alcohol industry needs to ensure the implementation of the code with the full comprehension of the code objectives with a sense of self-awareness and responsibility of as stakeholders in the business of producing alcohol beverages.
4. As non-alcohol beverages are produced, marketed and sold by alcohol industry are intended for adult consumers, the code should also be applied for its advertising, marketing and labelling of containers of related non-alcohol beverages as well.

## **II. Advertising and Marketing**

### **1. Prevention of Underage Drinking (Drinking by Persons Under the Legal Drinking Age)**

#### **(1) Labelling Content**

Labelling shall conform to the requirements set by the (Japanese) National Tax Agency with the notification titled “Labelling Standards Regarding Prevention of Underage Drinking” with such examples as “Underage drinking is prohibited by law” or “Drinking is after you turn twenty years old.”

## (2) Warning Labels Display Guidelines

### A. Applicable Media

The guidelines shall apply to advertising placed in the following representative media outlets among others:

Newspapers, magazines, billboards, television, radio, digital media on the internet, and flyers including leaflets

### B. Size and Exposure

The labelling shall be clear and legible characters using at least the following font sizes in print and seconds of exposure on television:

- i) For newspaper placements, fonts larger than 14 points shall be used for placements over five columns across and fonts larger than 10.5 points shall be used for placements over three half columns across and below five columns across.
- ii) For magazine placements, fonts larger than 14 points shall be used for a paper size over B5 and fonts larger than 10.5 points shall be used for paper sizes over B5 ½ and below B5.
- iii) For billboards, fonts larger than 20 points shall be used for a paper size over B3 and fonts larger than 14 points shall be used for a paper size below B3. For large billboards, such as the ones used to display on railway station walls, the appropriate font size shall take into account to the size of the paper.
- iv) For television spots, the warning message shall be exposed within the advertising spots as specified below:
  - a) Advertising spots less than 15 seconds      more than 1.5 seconds
  - b) Advertising spots over 15 seconds  
and less than 30 seconds                              more than 1.75 seconds
  - c) Advertising spots over 30 seconds              more than 2.0 seconds
- v) For the digital media on the internet, the warning shall be clearly legible with consideration for the size of displayable space.
- vi) For flyers, fonts larger than 14 points shall be used for a paper size over B5 and fonts larger than 10.5 points shall be used for a paper size over B5 ½ and below B5.

### C. Fonts and other matters

- i) Fonts shall be clearly legible.
- ii) Warning labels shall consider the matter of colours and be displayed in conspicuous places where they are easily visible.
- iii) For placement in television spots, following elements among others should be taken into account:
  - a) In principle, warning against underage drinking shall be placed at the end of

the spot. If the warning is placed before the end of the spot, thorough consideration shall be made so that the warning shall be clearly legible (using such method/s as outlining the characters against a coloured background.)

- b) A long sentence, such as, "The underage drinking is prohibited by law," shall be avoided.
- iv) For placement in radio spots, the following elements among others should be taken into account:
  - a) In principle, warning against underage drinking shall be placed at the end of the spot. However, it can be omitted if the duration of the advertising spot is too short.
  - b) Thorough consideration shall be made so that the warning narration shall be clearly audible.
- v) Buying alcohol advertising spots shall be considered on television or radio programs once it has been verified that the advertising is being developed for an intended audience with a 70% composition of adult.

#### D. Labelling omission

When it is clear that the alcohol product is going to be used as a condiment or for medicinal purposes and be mainly traded wholesale to businesses such as bars and restaurants, labelling may be omitted.

### (3) Guidelines for Advertising and Marketing

- A. Advertising and marketing materials and their expressions shall not encourage, imply or induce underage drinking.
- B. Advertising for alcohol beverages shall not be placed on television and radio programs, in newspapers, magazines, in digital media on the internet, and flyers that target minors or persons under the legal drinking age.
- C. Placing advertising spots immediately before or after the television and radio programs that are targeted for the minors or persons less than 20 years of age shall be avoided as much as possible.
- D. Models and actors employed to appear in advertising and marketing materials shall not be the minors.
- E. Models and actors employed to appear in television advertising shall be a minimum of 25 years old and shall not reasonably appear to be younger than 25 years of age. (Note: Among the models and actors, extras for the advertising are exempt from these guidelines.)
- F. Personalities and characters that have particular appeal to the minors shall not be used for models for advertising alcohol beverages.
- G. Alcohol beverage brand logos and trademarks shall not be used or licensed for use on clothing, toys, games or other items intended for use primarily by the minors.

- H. Advertising and marketing materials shall not confuse alcohol beverages as soft drinks.
- I. Advertising and marketing campaign shall not target or be directed to the minors.
- J. The following types of advertising shall not be placed in the public transport system:
  - i) Exterior advertising on trains or vehicles
  - ii) Exclusive interior advertising
  - iii) Sticker advertising on automatic turnstiles
  - iv) Sticker advertising on staircases (platforms and all areas beyond turnstiles)
  - v) Column advertising (platforms and all areas beyond turnstiles)
- K. Billboard advertisements shall not be located within 100 meters of established elementary, middle and high schools.

## **2. Alcohol and Health Issues**

### (1) Warning labels and related matters

#### A. Labelling content

The warning label shall include the following content examples from i) to iv):

- i) The warning on drinking alcohol beverages for pregnant women: “Drinking alcohol during pregnancy and nursing may adversely affect the development of your foetus or infant.”
- ii) The warning on alcohol consumption and health: “Be aware not to drink excessively” or “Drink moderately.”
- iii) The warning against drunk driving: “Drunk driving is prohibited by law.”
- iv) The warning on recycling on alcohol beverage containers: “Please recycle empty beverage containers.”

#### B. Applicable Media

The guidelines shall apply to warnings in the following media among others: newspapers, magazines, billboards, digital media on the internet, and flyers including leaflets.

#### C. Font size, fonts and labelling omission

- i) The guidelines set force in II-1 shall apply. (except for codes concerning television and radio)
- ii) If a surface area for labelling in the applicable media is less than 100 square centimetres, warning content set forth in 1 (1) and 2 (1) above can be arbitrary chosen for the labelling.
- iii) In the case of television advertising, the content set forth in 2 (1) A i) and ii) above shall be displayed.

### (2) Advertising and marketing materials shall not contain, depict or portray the following elements:

- A. Expressions that lead to excessive drinking;
  - B. Expressions that lead to involuntary drinking, including “chugging or gulping down,” “binge drinking” or other heavy episodic drinking;
  - C. Expressions that induce dependency on alcohol beverages;
  - D. Expressions that induce drinking while pregnant or nursing;
  - E. Expressions that encourage or induce drinking before or while playing sports or before or while taking a bath;  
(“While” means just before, during and immediately after playing sports and just before and during taking a hot bath.)
  - F. Expressions that induce drinking while working that may lead to serious accidents;
  - G. Expressions that induce drinking at inappropriate times including dangerous situations;
  - H. Expressions that lead to drunk driving;
  - I. Expressions that may impair safety referencing the underlying principles of the Product Liability Law;
  - J. Expressions that oppose the protection of the environment, including recycling;
  - K. Expressions that oppose the principles supporting animal protection;
  - L. Television advertising shall not contain sound effects such as swallowing or gulping down sounds.
  - M. Television advertising shall not contain close-up scenes of a throat area during drinking. For those scenes, it should be considered that the area above shoulders including head be portrayed.
- (3) Time periods when television advertising shall not be placed between 5h and 18h00 — Exceptions shall be corporate image advertising (advertisement that features such elements as corporate business philosophy and social contribution in order to develop a corporate brand and image) and public service announcement (advertising that warns underage drinking, drunk driving, drinking while pregnant, or encourage container recycling and moderate drinking and those others that raise awareness of the public welfare). Advertising shall not contain displays of alcohol beverage products and scenes of drinking (including portrayal and depiction of pouring and smelling drinks.)

### **III. Alcohol Beverage Containers**

#### **1. Prevention of underage drinking**

Displays and labelling shall be conducted according to the established laws, rules and regulations.

#### **2. Alcohol and Health Issues**

##### **(1) Labelling content**

The warning label shall include the following content examples from A to C:

- A. Warnings for drinking alcohol beverages for pregnant women: “Drinking alcohol

during pregnancy and nursing may adversely affect the development of your foetus or infant.”

- B. Warnings for alcohol consumption and health: “Be aware not to drinking excessively” or “Drink moderately.”
- C. Warnings on recycling on alcohol beverage containers: “Please recycle empty beverage containers.”

(2) Applicable Containers

The content guidelines shall apply to containers larger than 2.0 fluid liters. For containers less than 2.0 fluid liters, added warning content placement as set force above in III.2. (1) may be arbitrarily undertaking placing the label.

(3) Labelling Methods

- A. The warning shall be placed on an area of container that is easily visible.
- B. The font shall be in Japanese and the font size shall be larger than 6 points with all the characters in consistent in size.
- C. When it is clear that the alcohol beverage is going be used as condiment or for medicinal purposes and will be predominately traded wholesale for use by outlets such as bars and restaurants, labelling may be omitted.

### **3. Preventing Confusion with Soft Drinks**

(1) Labelling on alcohol beverage containers and wrappings shall take colour and patterns in consideration so as to not cause confusion with non-alcohol beverages. Non-alcohol beverages will include soft drinks and fruit juices.

(2) Labelling for alcohol beverage marks with less than 10% alcohol by volume shall be placed on containers for alcohol beverages.

A. Applicable Containers

- i) All tin can containers
- ii) All containers other than tin can for less than 300 fluid millilitres

B. Diagram of Alcohol Beverage Markings

- i) Alcohol beverage marks shall contain the words ‘alcohol beverage’ written in either a circle or an oval with the choice of colours or characters or outlining characters against a coloured background being free of restriction.
- ii) The word ‘alcohol beverage’ shall be written horizontally in gothic and the word ‘alcohol’ shall have the phonetical reading of the Chinese character at its side.
- iii) The font size of ‘alcohol’ shall be over 20 points for containers with volumes less than 350 fluid millilitres and over 24 points for containers more than 350 fluid millilitres in volume.

C. The placement of the alcohol beverage marks shall be on the side of the body and shoulder of the container where they can be easily visible.

- D. The alcohol beverage marks shall be clearly visible using such a method as to feature a contrast colour to the background with no patterns being placed in and around the enclosing circle.

#### **IV. Non-alcohol Beverages**

##### **1. Definition of non-alcohol beverages**

Non-alcohol beverages are all types of beverages containing 0.00% of alcohol by volume that taste similar to alcohol beverages intended and recommended for adult consumption for persons over 20 years of age.

##### **2. Advertising and Marketing of Non-Alcoholic Beverages**

- (1) Models and actors employed to appear in television advertising for non-alcoholic beverages shall be a minimum of 25 years old.
- (2) Advertising and marketing materials and their expressions shall not encourage, imply or induce underage drinking.
- (3) Advertising and marketing materials shall not be placed on television and radio programs, in newspapers, magazines, in digital media on the internet, and flyers that target minors or persons under the legal drinking age.
- (4) Placing advertising spots immediately before or after the television and radio programs that are targeted for the minors or persons less than 20 years of age shall be avoided as much as possible.
- (5) Personalities and characters that have particular appeal to minors shall not be used for models for advertising.
- (6) Alcohol beverage brand logos and trademarks shall not be used or licensed for use on clothing, toys, games or other items intended for use primarily by the minors.
- (7) Advertising and marketing materials shall not confuse alcohol beverages with soft drinks.
- (8) Advertising and marketing campaigns shall not target or be directed to minors.
- (9) Buying non-alcohol advertising spots shall be considered on television or radio programs once it has been verified that the advertising is being developed for an intended audience with a 70% composition of adult.
- (10) Billboard advertisements shall not be located within 100 meters from established elementary, middle and high schools.
- (11) Advertising and marketing campaigns, including sampling, for non-alcoholic beverages shall not target or be directed at pregnant women or those who have ceased drinking or given up drinking for health reasons.

##### **3. Labelling of Non-Alcohol Beverage Containers**

- (1) The non-alcoholic beverage label will show that the products are intended for persons

20 years of age and over.

- (2) Product designs that use the same brand name as existing alcoholic beverages or similar designs that make consumers confuse non-alcoholic beverages with alcohol beverages shall not be used.

#### **4.Others**

Retailers undertaking sales management training to separate beverages by categories when stocking shelves and verify customers' proof of age upon selling alcohol beverages shall treat non-alcohol beverages in the same manner.

### **V. Compliance with the Voluntary Code**

The Japan Liquor Industry Council is committed to absolute compliance of the Voluntary Code and each member organization shall make every effort to ensure that they comply with the Code and make every effort to consider ways to safeguard its execution and effectiveness.

Accordingly, when the Council receives complaints from consumers and such on the execution of the Voluntary Code, the Council shall make every effort to hold investigative meetings as necessary to correct the issue or issues.

### **Supplementary Provisions**

History of Amendments to the Voluntary Code : (Content is omitted.)

March 1992, April 1993, June 1995, May 1998, December 2000, October 2005, May 2006, December 2006, January 2008, July 2009, February 2010, August 2010, June 2011, and November 2012

Provisions (Amendment on 1 July 2016)

This Code shall apply to all broadcasts from 1 July 2016. The implementation shall be made as early as possible except if it is not possible due to on-going advertising or marketing programs.

Note: The Japan Liquor Industry Council

The Council is composed of the following nine organizations:

- Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association,
- Nippon Distillers Association,
- Brewers Association of Japan,
- Japan Spirits & Liquors Makers Association,
- Liquor Wholesales Association Japan,
- All Japan Liquor Merchants Association,
- Japan Wineries Association,
- Japan Wines and Spirits Importers' Association,
- Japan Brewers Association

**[Reference] Design image of alcohol beverage marks (examples)**

1. Less than 350 fluid ml (20 points block letters)

(1) Circle



(2) Oval



(3) Over 350 fluid ml (24 points block letters)

(1) Circle



(2) Oval

