Authority seeks to regulate ads on TV and radio

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NAIROBI: Advertisements on radio and television will be restricted to a maximum seven minutes in every 30 minutes of broadcasting, in proposed code of conduct for radio and TV services released by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).

The regulator has released a programming code for free-to-air content for radio and television services in Kenya for public review and feedback before implementation.

In the proposed rules, broadcasters will not be able to insert more than two advertising breaks in a thirty minute programme.

The regulations also prohibit advertising during live broadcasts of national holiday ceremonies, parliamentary proceedings, and state of the nation addresses. In addition, broadcasts of such live events shall not be open for sponsorship.

Image via 123RF

Broadcasters will also be held responsible for advertising material transmitted by their stations and must therefore ensure that all advertisements are legal, honest, decent, and truthful and conform to the rules of fair competition.

Also, in the new guidelines text crawls running news headlines shall be a requirement throughout a newscast.

"All programmes broadcast between 5am and 10pm must be suitable for family listening and viewing with the regulator having powers to revoke licenses of radio and Television stations that air adult rated content during the period," the proposed rules suggest.

Only programmes or movies classified or rated by the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) as General Exhibition (GE), Parental Guidance (PG) or rated 16 may be aired during this period.

The watershed period guidelines apply to all programme and non-programme matter such as advertisements, infomercials, programme promotions, programme listings, community service announcements, station identifications, commentaries, interviews and documentaries.

The set guidelines will also see local content get a boost as radio and television stations shall ensure, within one year of entry into force of the code, to have not less than 40 percent of the programming local content.

Broadcasters' local content programming will be raised to 60 percent within three years of entry into force of the code. The local content programming referred to excludes news, advertising and teleshopping.

"We think the new code could be beneficial to large broadcasters such as Nation Media Group and Standard Group, encouraging consolidation and the presence of only committed players in the market place," said Standard Investment Bank Research commenting on the issue.

The Investment firm also says compliance costs will however increase, especially with regards to local content requirements.