[GB] Regulator Fines Company for Breach of Advertising Rules

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The Independent Television Commission (ITC), the UK regulator of private broadcasting, has fined a cable company £10,000 for breaches of its Rules on the Amount and Scheduling of Advertising in relation to local advertising. The amount of the fine is relatively small compared to some other recent fines levied by the Commission (£2,000,000 in one other recent case) but it does show the importance of financial penalties even in the case of relatively minor breaches.

The company, Telewest, had been given a formal warning by the ITC in March 1998 after three incidents when complaints were upheld about scheduling errors in local advertising breaks. A fourth warning was issued in September 1998 after advertisements for an adult chat line (a phone conversation service with erotic content) and for condoms appeared on the Cartoon Network. In all cases complaints had been made by viewers. The final incident took place in November 1998 when an advertisement for an 18-rated film was screened on the Cartoon Network. This demonstrated, according to the ITC, that Telewest still did not have adequate monitoring procedures in place. However, the fine was a small one as the Commission took into account the Company's willingness to rectify its failings and considered that staff were taking the issue of appropriate scheduling seriously.

ITC Imposes Financial Penalty on Telewest. See ITC Press Release 11/99, 3 March 1999

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