# [GB] Regulator Orders Re-Timing of Main News Bulletin

**IRIS 2000-8:1/14**

*Tony Prosser*
*University of Bristol Law School*

The Independent Television Commission, which regulates private broadcasting in the UK, has determined that the Channel 3 (ITV) companies have not complied with conditions set when it allowed them to move its main news bulletin from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. in late 1998. The companies wished to do this to permit them to show uninterrupted films and other programmes after the 9 p.m. "watershed" when more adult programming is allowed to be shown. As a result the Commission has issued an order requiring the Channel 3 companies to reschedule the news "to an earlier time when it is more accessible to viewers."

According to the Commission, the new bulletins at 6.30 p.m. and 11 p.m. had maintained high quality. However, the total audience for the bulletins had fallen by 13.9% and there had been a decline of over 16% in the audience for regional news. A Committee of the House of Commons had recommended that the Channel 3 companies be required to re-introduce the 10 p.m. bulletin as a central element of its commitment to public service broadcasting.

The companies are now challenging the order in the courts by judicial review. However, further complexity has been caused by the decision of the BBC (after the Commission's decision) to re-schedule its own main bulletin from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m..

***Independent Television Commission, "ITC Direction to ITV on Rescheduling Nightly News", 27 July 2000.***

http://www.itc.org.uk/documents/upl_277.doc

***Independent Television Commission, "ITC Calls for Proposals from ITV to Arrest Decline in News Audiences", ITC Press Release 33/00, 25 April 2000. Culture, Media and Sport Committee, "Whatever Happened to News At Ten?", HC 289, 1999-2000.***

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmcumeds/289/28902.htm

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026