

Water treatment Code

Preamble

In addition to legal provisions applicable to this sector, advertising for water treatment devices, notably for drinkable water, no matter the form, must comply with these ethical rules:

1. Legal reminder

The advertiser must take into account the following rules while creating the advertisement:

-Article R.1321-93 of the Public Health Code;

-Articles R.112-7; L.121-1, L.122-1, L.122-2 of the Consumption Code;

-Ministerial Circular DGCCRF/DGS/D2/EA4/2010/298 of July 30th, 2010 regarding regulation applicable to advertising for drinkable waters;

-Information note of the DGCCRF n° 2013-35 of February 5th 2013 regarding the information that must be indicated on packaging and in the advertisement for packaged water made drinkable by a treatment.

2. Vocabulary

When words and expressions have an official definition, they must always be used in an appropriate way that matches with the aforesaid definition.

Words and expressions used must not mislead the consumer regarding the nature and the features of the product, the device or the advertiser's actions.

All advertisers must make sure, before the broadcast of their advertisement, that the use of specific words as "mineral water", "mineralized", "spring water", "drinkable", "for baby's bottle", "treated", "nature", "sterilized", "purified" (etc.) is possible.

The word "pure", and its derivatives, can't be used alone, without any qualifying terms, for water that has been treated chemically, since no water can be chemically pure. (Water composed of only water molecules).

For example, the words "purer" and their derivatives can be used in order to emphasize an improvement in the quality of tap water or the benefits provided by the use of a water treatment device.

The use of words such as "optimized", "improved", which aim at highlighting the comfort features of treated water for the consumer is possible if they don't mislead the consumer regarding the features of the treated water or if they don't assimilate the treated tap water with another type of water. (cf. supra Loyalty).

When the word « filtered », is used, and/or any of its derivatives, information regarding the way it is filtered and the result of it, must be easily accessible for the consumer.

Concerning the specific vocabulary linked to water treatment, the definitions hereafter must be respected:

- « Water purification »: treating water in order to make it drinkable, with a level of quality compliant with an applicable legislation on water for human consumption (cf. decree 3 January 1989);

- «Water softening»: reducing calcium and magnesium salts content, i.e. water hardness, thanks to the use of ion exchange resins;
- « demineralization »: reducing the content of mineral salts that are dissolved in the water;
- « packaging »: water treatment by addition of chemical products;
- « filtration » : water treatment either by a mechanic action, in order to take out suspended material, or by absorption with the adherence of certain filtering surfaces as coal, in order to reduce the presence of certain negative items (smell, colorant, chlorine, lead, pesticide or other organic and non-organic substances);
- «reverse osmosis» (also called « osmosis »): water treatment that reduces the salts dissolved, thanks to semi-permeable membranes;
- « ultrafiltration »: water treatment using membranes allowing to retain suspended material and bacteria.

3. Loyalty

The advertising must not attribute exclusive virtues to a product or an advertiser, when competitor products or competitors have similar properties.

An advertiser cannot claim that certain actions are exclusively taken if they are in fact imposed on all by existing regulation.

This does not rule out the possibility for an advertisement, for pedagogical purposes, to inform about the existence of regulation in order to promote its implementation.

In order to comply with loyal competition rules, comparisons between mineral water and spring water must not be based on the inherent features of the types of water presented.

4. Veracity

The actions of advertisers and the properties of their products in this area should be significant before a claim can be made.

The advertiser must be able to support its claims by means of evidence that is reliable, objective and verifiable at the time of advertising.

Advertisements must not mislead the public about the actions of the advertiser or the properties of its products.

5. Health

Only claims concerning comfort and well-being can be used. The use of any other therapeutic claims, linking a product or a device to sickness prevention, or treatment and healing, are prohibited.

Advertisements must not denigrate other products or devices by implying that they can't contribute to good health. It can't suggest that one's good health will be positively impacted by not using a product or a device of the competitor.

It must not present images or statements likely to generate irrational or groundless fears.

Advertisements must not present in an excessive or misleading way the actions of the product or the device on human body.

6. Attestations

Advertisements must not reproduce or quote any statement or make any reference that aren't truthful, easily verifiable or verifiable by mere request to the advertiser.

Certifications must be linked to the experience of the person or organizations delivering the certificate, and can be quoted only with their formal authorization.

7. Sustainable development

All claims, indications or presentations in any form whatsoever, that establish a link between the brand(s), product(s), the device(s), service(s) and/or action(s) of an advertiser, and the respect of environment are considered as "environmental arguments".

The advertisement, with all its visual and audio elements, must accurately express the action of the advertiser or the properties of its products, in accordance with the available evidence.

In the advertisement the advertiser must indicate how and why its activities, products or devices have the claimed features. The advertiser should add clear background information in the advertisement about the qualities the advertised activities or products claim to have.

In cases where this explanation is too long to be included in the advertisement, essential information must be included, together with a reference to some means of communication allowing the general public to obtain further information. Signs or symbols may be used only if their origin is clearly indicated, and if there is no likelihood of confusion about their meaning.

Where it would be impossible to justify general formulations (e.g., *ecological, green, ethical, accountable, to preserve, fair, sustainable*, etc.), advertising must make these claims relative by using formulations such as "*helps to...*".

Words, phrases or prefixes used must not unduly reflect a lack of negative impact of the product or activity of the advertiser.