



Ad Standards Community Panel
PO Box 5110, Braddon ACT 2612
P (02) 6173 1500 | F (02) 6262 9833

AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0470/18
2	Advertiser	RepcO Ltd
3	Product	Automotive
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	24/10/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.6 - Health and Safety Unsafe behaviour

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features two men at a table. One sniffs a beaker of oil and identifies the brand and the other man pull a bag off the bottle of oil when he correctly identifies it.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

It shows someone sniffing oil fumes, which could lead to issues for others sniffing fumes and gives the impression it is acceptable to sniff fumes in a game

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

It was recently brought to our attention that a complaint had been made under





Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, specifically, under 2.6 - Health and Safety Unsafe behaviour. The following information is provided in response to the complaint. I ask that the Panel considers this during their evaluation of the issue.

Context

In September 2018, Repco undertook a brand reinvigoration project which included a new strategic platform of “expertise”. Amongst a series of Marketing assets, we produced four brand ads - the ad in question is the first and lead asset of the campaign.

Description of the Advertisement

This is a 15” brand advertisement which has been broadcast on TV and advertised via social media. The ad framework is set-up as two Repco employees sitting in a tea room on a break. In line with our new strategic platform, the pair are pitched as automotive enthusiasts and experts - so much so that they are spending their lunch break playing a guessing game about engine oil. As a parody on wine connoisseurs who sniff key notes from a wine glass, swirl their wine allowing it “breathe” and can often identify a varietal from such activity, the Repco employee displays similar actions - he swirls and smells engine oil from a beaker, from which he is able to correctly denote the oil brand and variant. The story, one based on humour and knowledge, is purely focussed on bringing to life the new strategic platform of expertise – i.e. our employees know their products so well they can pick an engine oil from sight and smell.

Comprehensive comments in relation to the complaint (taking into account the need to address all aspects of the advertising codes)

2.6 - Health and Safety Unsafe behaviour

It is unfortunate the advertisement has been interpreted as or with synergy to the sniffing of dangerous substances – this is not the intention. The Repco brand has a long-standing history in Australia with a reputation for authenticity and trust for over 95 years – we would never behave in a way that would intentionally compromise that. The ad is purely a parody on wine drinkers, which looks to use the essence of knowledge and humour in an entertaining context for a category that sometimes lacks genuine personality.

In relation to “health” – there is no health issue with smelling oil, in an unused state, oil does not exude fumes.

In relation to “unsafe behaviour” - none of the actions showcased were unsafe or illegal. In fact, the sense of smell is a common action used in advertising as a product or outcome identifier – this is seen in a variety of industries and categories including grocery, fragrance and toiletries.

It would be greatly appreciated if the Panel would take this statement into consideration whilst in evaluation of the advertisement.

Should you need any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.



THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement promotes sniffing fumes.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Panel noted that this television advertisement shows a man wearing a Repco shirt sniffing a beaker of oil and identifying the brand and product.

The Panel considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement depicts a man sniffing oil fumes and gives the impression that sniffing fumes is a game.

The Panel considered that the advertisement is more suggestive of wine connoisseurs smelling wine and identifying the vintage, year or attributes than petrol sniffing.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not present the oil sniffing and identifying the product as a game, but rather as similar to winning a bet or proving a point. The Panel noted that this scene is a demonstration of a qualified Repco technician knowing products well.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not encourage or condone inhalant abuse, and that the identification of vehicle oil products is relevant to the service of automotive maintenance.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety regarding health and safety. The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.

