

Submission Guide: Cinema (theatrical) content for distribution in cinemas

This document explains how to obtain BBFC classifications under the Licensing Act 2003 (“the Act”) for cinema (theatrical) content intended for distribution in cinemas.

This covers all content to be released in cinemas (theatrically). Please note this does not cover packaged media releases or content that is being distributed solely online/VOD by means of download or streaming.

Process overview

1. Request a booking date in our theatre via Horizon (the BBFC client portal).
2. You will be given a viewing date and delivery deadlines on Horizon.
3. Deliver the content on DCP (with KDM, if required) or link. We reserve the right to require the content on the format it will be released (DCP, DVD video or Blu-ray video).
4. You must pay the full fee prior to viewing.
5. We will issue the Black Card and classification certificate on Horizon.

What you need to start

Please note there is high demand for our theatre so we advise you to plan your submissions in advance, where possible, to ensure your release date is met.

- You will need a BBFC customer account and a Horizon login.
- You will need to fill in the submission form on Horizon, complete payment and supply the correctly formatted content, with an open KDM, if required.
- You must supply the exact version of the film that will be screened in cinemas to the public – this includes full colour correction and final sound mix. Watermarks / Digital Onscreen Graphics (DOGs) are generally not allowed.
- We can accept streaming and download links, however we reserve the right to require the DCP (or format it will be released in).

What content do I need to distribute with a BBFC classification?

All content released in UK cinemas must be submitted for classification, unless permission is granted by the licensing authority in the area where the film is being shown.

Our policies relating to IMAX, ScreenX and 4DX releases [can be found on our website](#).

Our policies relating to Reclassification of Films being Re-released in UK Cinemas [can also be found as a document.](#)

How much does it cost?

Please see our [Fee Tariff](#) for information on our costs. All prices exclude VAT.

How long should it take?

You can choose your RCD based on your release date, and we have a range of options available for you to choose from so you can get your classification based on your release schedule. We take bookings on a first-come, first-served basis, and have premium slots available for urgent jobs. Please note there is high demand for our theatre so we advise you to plan your submissions in advance, where possible, to ensure your release date is met.

We offer a limited number of Express and Next Day viewing slots that you may book in advance. There is a fee uplift for these premium services, please see our [Fee Tariff](#) for details.

How do I pay?

We require upfront payment on all works. Once our Finance team has calculated the fee, the invoice will be available on Horizon.

If you do not settle your invoice by the payment deadline, this may prevent your future submissions from being classified. We will issue a withdrawal fee if payment is not received by the deadline.

In what format should I submit my content?

We can accept links to content however if the image quality is not up to standard we reserve the right to require your content in the same format that it will be released in cinemas. You may submit your content as a DCP, streaming or download link, or on DVD-Video or Blu-ray-Video.

DCP theatrical features should be submitted on a CRU HDD or HDD, or on an installed service (LANsat, MovieTransit, QubeWire)

DCP theatrical trailers should be submitted on a USB or via a file upload client or FTP. Digital download links for trailers should be sent to [our Projection team](#).

Please contact [our Projection team](#) if you are submitting content on 35mm or 70mm as we will need to make special arrangements for the screening.

Further details for supplying theatrical content [can be found on our website.](#)

Films and trailers that are only being shown in cinemas on other video media such as ProRes, HDCam, BetaSP or DigiBeta must be submitted to us on a DVD video struck from the theatrical master.

Please note, we will charge a withdrawal fee if we do not receive your content and an open KDM, if needed, by the delivery deadline.

How do I submit?

If you require a classification from us you must create a submission record on Horizon.

If you do not have a BBFC account and Horizon access [you may request these](#).

Delivering your content for viewing

Please send hard drives and discs to us at BBFC, 3 Soho Square, London W1D 3HD. KDMs and digital links should be [emailed to us](#).

What happens once my content is viewed?

We offer you a rating on the Client Portal which you can choose to accept or decline. Should you accept the rating, your Black Card and classification certificate is made available on Horizon. This means your film is formally classified for release in UK cinemas. If you decline the rating, either to request cuts for a lower rating or ask for a Reconsideration Viewing, we can guide you through the process. We will publish the classification decision on [our public database on our website](#).

What do I need to do with my classification?

We recommend that the Black Card image appear at the start of the film for at least five seconds and in such a way that it can be seen on screen by any member of the audience.

We offer guidance on how to publicise the rating on print ads, theatrical posters and TV spots.

<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/CCA%20Guidance%20for%20Distributors%20%28updated%20March%202013%29.pdf>

How can I use my classification?

Your classification relates to the film's release in UK cinemas. You may not use this classification for home entertainment or digital video services.

Where can I get more help with my theatrical submission?

Our business hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm (excluding UK public holidays).

Customer Helpline

Email: helpline@bbfc.co.uk

Phone: 020 7440 0299

Projection

Email: projection@bbfc.co.uk

Phone: 020 7440 1590

Finance

Email: finance@bbfc.co.uk

Phone: 020 7440 0371 / 0389

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