



# REPORTING STANDARDS

## Email Newsletters

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## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the Reporting Standards for Email Newsletters.

The PDF versions of the Reporting Standards are issued at a certain point in time. As Reporting Standards are updated periodically, please check our [website](#) to ensure you are using the latest applicable standards.

Any information included in the guidance sections provide examples of how the requirements might be complied with. We will add to or amend these over time where we consider there may be a benefit following the identification of specific circumstances or requests for advice.

If you have any queries regarding how the Reporting Standards affect you or any specific queries please contact the ABC Client services team on 01442 870 800 or email [info@abc.org.uk](mailto:info@abc.org.uk).

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## METRICS AND REPORTING

### DEFINITION

Defined Email Newsletter communications delivered in a given period.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **Prior registration of Email Newsletter distribution claims is required**
2. **Email Newsletter distribution will comprise email newsletters delivered to a valid and deliverable email address**
3. **Each Email Newsletter distribution will be de-duplicated by email address**
4. **Additional metrics may be reported**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prior registration of Email Newsletter distribution claims is required**
  - a) You must notify us of your intention to claim Email Newsletter distribution as early as possible so that we can provide advice on whether your claim is capable of being properly recorded and checked.
  - b) Our approach is to understand how the email system you use measures and records your Email Newsletter distribution. We will review its configuration/implementation in order to establish that it will provide the relevant information in accordance with our Reporting Standards. This will require more audit work on our part if the claim or system used is more complex.
    - i) To achieve this you will need to:
      - Confirm the particular Email Newsletter(s) to be registered and what system you use to distribute them. You may include a number of different Email Newsletters on the same certificate – for example the email newsletters for multiple brands or for your publishing company.
      - Provide us with the appropriate information to confirm metric counts and configuration settings. This may include access to the email system dashboard (on a review/read only basis) and if necessary for more complex claims, the underlying system data (e.g. logged records).
      - Include us in mailings when distributed on request.
2. **Email Newsletter distribution will comprise email newsletters delivered to a valid and deliverable email address**
  - a) You must exclude emails that generate a hard bounce or Non-Delivery-Notification (NDN) measured at least 24 hours after the time of the last email sent in that mailing.
    - i) A 'hard bounce' is defined as a permanent reason that an email cannot be delivered, generating a delivery failure message. *For example: 'mailbox not found', 'host unknown'.*
    - ii) 'Soft bounce' responses can be ignored. *For example: 'delivery delayed', 'out of office'.*
3. **Each Email Newsletter distribution will be de-duplicated by email address**
  - a) As well as excluding emails that generate a hard bounce as detailed above, you must also exclude duplicate instances of the same email address in a single mailing. Note:
    - 'Single mailing' in this context refers to a distinct issue of an Email Newsletter or timed mailing (e.g. May newsletter, or Morning Briefing). The 'single mailing' may be split into tranches or scheduled to be sent at different times for logistical or practical reasons.

- You do not need to de-duplicate between separate mailings or different Email Newsletters.

**4. Additional optional metrics may be reported**

- a) **Emails Opened**  
Defined as the average number of emails included in the Email Newsletter distribution that have been opened. This can be expressed as a number or percentage.
- b) **Registered Addresses**  
Defined as the average number of de-duplicated, contactable email addresses in the distribution list that have requested the Email Newsletter.
- c) **Other analyses derived from the metrics certified.** *For example: averages, ratios, figures per newsletter, figures per month etc.* We reserve the right to require appropriate explanations/descriptions to be added to any such optional information.

**REPORTING**

**1. You must report Email Newsletter distribution for the relevant Reporting Period**

- a) The Reporting Period may be either:
  - i) In the case of a single mailing, the date(s) on which the mailing was sent; or.
  - ii) A whole calendar month or any combination of consecutive calendar months (up to a maximum of 12).
- b) To remain registered you must report Email Newsletter distribution for certification at least once a year, as follows:
  - i) Within 12 months of registering with ABC
  - ii) Subsequent certificates must have Reporting Period end dates that are within 12 months of each other. *For example: a certificate for a period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 must be followed by a certificate ending no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.*

**2. You must report the number and average distribution per mailing of each Email Newsletter distributed in the period**

- a) For each Email Newsletter you must report:
  - i) Email Newsletter name/description
  - ii) Average distribution per mailing
  - iii) Number of mailings in the period
- b) You may report two or more Email Newsletters on a single certificate (these can be from different brands), providing each is reported to the same Reporting Period. They will be listed individually with a figure for each. *For example:*

<i>Newsletter name</i>	<i>Distribution (Average per mailing)</i>	<i>Number of Mailings</i>
<i>Fashion Update</i>	<i>12,000</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Travel Update</i>	<i>10,000</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Weekly Briefing</i>	<i>5,000</i>	<i>50</i>

- c) The registered name for the product must appropriately describe the Email Newsletter(s) included.

**3. You may report optional metrics**

- a) You may optionally report:

- i) Other industry-agreed metrics, including Emails Opened, Registered Addresses. *See section 'requirements' section 4 above for definitions.*
- ii) Other analyses, including averages ratios, figures per newsletter/month etc.

**4. You may optionally report a description of the product and its content**

- a) This statement will be verified at audit. *For example: 'Our monthly fashion and travel newsletters include features, offers and competitions. The weekly briefings provide up-to-date digest of key news events'.* **Note:** This statement is not to contain market comparisons or distribution claims.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND RECORD KEEPING

### INTRODUCTION

This section sets out some key requirements relating to the overall reporting and auditing of your ABC claim.

### PRINCIPLES

1. Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period
2. Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements

### REQUIREMENTS

1. Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period
  - a) You must retain and be able to provide all records supporting the claim, including an analysis by each mailing reported.
  - b) You must retain the records supporting the claim for a period of 6 months following certification of the claim or until the audit of the certificate for the subsequent Reporting Period has been completed if sooner.
  - c) Records supporting the claim must be retained and made available to us on request, in accordance with the ABC Byelaws.
2. Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arms-length' arrangements
  - a) Transactions or arrangements (such as sales or distribution services) with your own organisation or Related Parties will initially be deemed as not bona fide 'arms-length' for ABC purposes, meaning they cannot be included in your claim. However, they can be included if you are able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of your auditor that these comply with the Reporting Standards and are bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements.
  - b) Related Parties for ABC purposes will include where:
    - i) One party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
    - ii) The parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
    - iii) One party has influence over the financial & operating policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
    - iv) The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.
    - v) Transactions between contract publishers and their clients are deemed not to be arm's length in relation to a specific products produced for that client.

This means the following are considered Related Parties for ABC purposes:

- The publisher, its subsidiary, parent and fellow undertakings (and Directors of these)
- Associates and Joint Ventures (and their investors)

## RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

### DEFINITION

The Return Form is a submission in which the distribution claim is reported to ABC for certification. Each Email Newsletter distribution claim is subject to audit.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **A Return Form must be submitted for the registered product for every applicable Reporting Period**
2. **The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
3. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
4. **Each Email Newsletter distribution claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **A Return Form must be submitted for every applicable Reporting Period**
  - a) You must submit a Return Form for the Reporting Period you have chosen to report.
  - b) We will advise you how to submit your Return Form and by when. For example, online via the ABC return website. However, if you have not heard from us at the appropriate time please contact us.
  - c) You will submit your Return Form to us, authorised by an appropriate individual representing your organisation.
  - d) Whilst our systems contain some arithmetic and logic validation processes, the accuracy of the Return Form remains your responsibility.
  - e) Estimates and assumptions must not be made on the Return Form unless the Reporting Standards allow for them, or we have authorised them.
2. **The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
  - a) We will inform you of the applicable Submission Deadline.
  - b) It is your responsibility to ensure Return Forms are submitted by the Submission Deadline. Failure to do so can result in a penalty and/or cancellation of your product's ABC registration under the ABC Byelaws.
3. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
  - a) We will publish the certified data on our website subject to any timing criteria applicable to the sector. We may also make arrangements to provide our data to be published via commercial data providers and to those who subscribe to our data services.
  - b) We will confirm when Email Newsletter distribution figures will become publicly available, normally 5 working days after a draft Certificate has been sent to you.
4. **Each Email Newsletter distribution claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**
  - a) The audit must be carried out by ABC Staff Auditors.
  - b) Requirements in relation to the auditor and audits will be covered by the ABC Byelaws, ABC Audit Programmes and contractual arrangements.
  - c) If following an audit we identify material problems with the Return Form or Certificate, then we will propose to revise the claim. If a Certificate has already been issued we will issue an updated certificate that identifies the changes. This replaces your original Certificate and must be used in its place. The process is as follows:
    - i) We will send you a letter detailing the reason/problem giving rise to the amendment.

- ii) You will have 10 working days from the receipt of this letter to provide any further information to us, or object to the revision of the claim.
- iii) If you wish to object to the revision of the claim you must do this in writing to the Director of Audit who will investigate and provide a decision within 10 working days. If the objection is to a decision by the Director of Audit or the Chief Executive then the first level of appeal will be in accordance with the Review Procedure detailed in the ABC Byelaws.
- iv) Subsequent Certificates will not be issued until we have resolved all queries on a previous audit and issued the updated Certificate, if applicable.