



Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) and RTÉ for the year 2009

Summary

The number of complaints forwarded by the BCC to RTÉ in 2009 was 423. This is the ninth year in a row where the number of complaints received has been greater than in the previous year. However the figures for 2009 are distorted because 144 of the complaints refer to one broadcast and a subsequent apology (a news report on a Brian Cowen caricature). If these are discounted there was actually a decrease on the previous year. The number of complaints upheld in 2009 was 4. This is a significant decrease on 2008 when 18 complaints were upheld. The final figure for complaints upheld about programming broadcast in 2009 may increase as the BCC was replaced by the Compliance Committee of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) in the last quarter of 2009. The Compliance Committee did not adjudicate on any complaints about RTÉ programming in 2009, so there was a backlog of complaints brought forward to 2010.

Number of BCC Complaints received by RTÉ

2009	423
2008	333
2007	261
2006	208
2005	182
2004	165
2003	101
2002	70
2001	30

Nature of Complaints

The BCC/BAI provides a series of categories under which complaints may be made. Complainants may choose one or more categories, so the total number of categories exceeds the total number of complaints. In some cases where the official complaints form is not used, the BCC/BAI determines which category applies.

2009

Impartiality/Objectivity/Fairness 253
Programme Standards (inc. Taste and Decency) 133
Inaccuracy 33
Advertising Codes 29
Privacy 23
Law and Order 8
Slander 1

Impartiality replaced Taste and Decency as the major cause of complaint in 2009. There was a significant increase in the number of complaints that claimed breaches of privacy in 2009 (23, up from 9 in 2008) though none was upheld.

Complaints Resolved

Of the 423 complaints forwarded to RTÉ by the BCC/BAI in 2009 269 were resolved or withdrawn when the complainants received RTÉ's submissions, 104 complaints about RTÉ output were adjudicated on in 2009 and were not upheld, 4 were upheld. The remainder were outstanding at the end of 2009.

Upheld Complaints 2009

2009 4
2008 18
2007 17
2006 5
2005 17
2004 5

There were 4 complaints upheld in 2009 (2 of these referred to one programme)

***This is Nightlive* (RTÉ Two Television) Breach of Code of Programme Standards
2 complaints**

***Colm and Jim-Jim Breakfast Show* (RTÉ 2FM Radio) Breach of Code of Programme Standards**

***The Late Late Show* (RTÉ One Television) Breach of impartiality requirement as a contributor gave a political endorsement in the run up to the local elections.**

Complaints by Output Divisions

The News and Current Affairs Division were responsible for the most complaints in 2009. The BCC/BAI forwarded 233 complaints about News and Current Affairs output during the year.

The Television Division led to 97 complaints (48 referred to in house productions, 38 to independent productions and 11 to acquired programming). 4 complaints about promotions are included in this category

The Radio Division led to 59 complaints*

Advertising generated 29 complaints (16 radio ads and 13 television ads)

There were in addition 2 complaints about the broadcast of the Angelus, two complaints about Referendum Commission Broadcasts and one complaint about RTE.ie

(* Current Affairs radio programmes such as *Today with Pat Kenny*, *Liveline* and *Drivetime* are part of the Radio Division's output)

Programmes attracting the most complaints (excluding News)

Prime Time/Prime Time Investigates 32

Gerry Ryan Show 24

The Late Late Show 24

Today with Pat Kenny 16

This is Nightlive 9

Multiple complaints about individual broadcasts

News report on Brian Cowen caricature 9

News apology for the caricature report 135

Prime Time Fas Castlebar 21 (bias against a deceased identified individual, mostly by family members)

News reporting of Newry shopping during public sector strike 10 (bias)

Advert Road Safety 7 (claims that the advert was sexist)

Late Late Show 7 (presenter's remarks about black people and break dancing)

