



ICBA Guidelines for the Composition, Labelling and Responsible Marketing of Energy Drinks

Adopted by the ICBA Board, 16 December 2013

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) is an international nongovernmental organization that represents the interests of the worldwide non-alcoholic beverages industry. The members of ICBA operate in more than 200 countries and produce, distribute, and sell a variety of non-alcoholic beverages, such as sparkling and still beverages including soft drinks, juice-containing beverages, bottled waters, sports drinks, energy drinks and ready-to-drink coffees and teas.

Recognizing our continuing responsibility to provide world-class leadership of the energy drink category, ICBA has updated and enhanced our 2013 Guidelines for the Composition, Labelling and Responsible Marketing of Energy Drinks (hereinafter called “*Guidelines*”). These Guidelines take into account the various codes and guidelines that have already been voluntarily developed by ICBA member associations. These guidelines can also serve as a template for our local and regional beverage associations.

What Are Energy Drinks?

Energy drinks are non-alcoholic functional beverages. The term “energy drink” is a generic category descriptor used worldwide as an accepted product denomination and is widely understood by regulators, consumers, media and manufacturers to describe the product category^{i,ii}. Energy drinks provide safe levels of caffeine, similar to that provided by coffee.

Energy drinks have been marketed in more than 175 countries for more than 30 years and are today safely consumed and enjoyed by millions of consumers worldwide every day. A number of globally-recognized risk assessment institutions have confirmed that the caffeine content of energy drinks can safely be consumed along with moderate caffeine intake from other food and beverage sources.ⁱⁱⁱ

In total, energy drinks currently represent less than 1 % of the global non-alcoholic beverages market.^{iv} The global contribution of energy drinks to caffeine intake across all ages groups is 2%, with coffee, tea, some foods, and other non-alcoholic beverages accounting for the remaining 98%.^v

It is worth noting that some domestic regulatory regimes for energy drinks may include compositional, labelling and marketing requirements for energy drink manufacturers.

What ingredients are commonly found in energy drinks?

The ingredients commonly found in energy drinks have been deemed safe by leading food standard agencies^{vi}, and ICBA member companies are committed to using them responsibly. In general, energy drinks contain caffeine and other ingredients such as but not limited to vitamins, carbohydrates and taurine. Energy drinks typically have a total caffeine content from all sources of 75-80 mg per 250 milliliter, or 8 fluid ounces. Traditionally, energy drinks may contain calories through ingredients such as sugar, due to its nutritional role in providing caloric energy, or may have low or no-calories through the use of low-calorie sweeteners, e.g, aspartame.

OUR LABELLING COMMITMENTS

ICBA members believe that information provided on the package label is an important opportunity to help consumers make informed choices and encourage moderate consumption. ICBA member companies commit to providing the following essential labelling information:

- Identify on the label the total quantity of caffeine from all sources contained in the beverage per 100 ml and/or per serving and/or per package, if not regulated by local laws and regulations regarding labelling and/or nutrient facts panel or information.
- Ensure that their energy drink labels do not promote the mixing of energy drinks with alcohol or make any claims that the consumption of energy drinks together with alcohol counteracts the effects of the alcohol.
- Include an advisory statement on the labels of energy drinks to the effect of “Not recommended for children or pregnant or breast-feeding women” and/or “Consume moderately” or similar.
- Label their energy drinks in compliance with provisions for conventional foods, not as dietary supplements or food supplements, except in cases where required by applicable legislation.
- Ensure that their labelling of energy drinks also complies with the principles for the sales and marketing of energy drinks as outlined below.
- Where an energy drink is not sold in a pre-packaged form, and/or not required to bear a label, ICBA member companies strive to display both the information on caffeine content and the advisory statement on or in connection with the display of the product.

OUR SALES AND MARKETING COMMITMENTS

If not already required by applicable legislation, ICBA member companies commit to the following regarding the sales and marketing of energy drinks:

- ICBA member companies do not market energy drinks to children^{vii}, in both on-line and traditional media.
- ICBA member companies do not sell energy drinks in primary and secondary schools.
- ICBA member companies do not conduct samplings of energy drinks to children or in child-focused settings such as primary and secondary schools and/or playgrounds.
- ICBA and its members consider it misleading to label beverages that are a mixture of energy drinks and alcohol as ‘energy drinks.’

- When promoting the benefits of energy drinks and their ingredients, ICBA member companies do not make claims on the effects of the consumption of alcohol together with energy drinks.
- As with all other beverages, ICBA member companies support moderate consumption of their energy drink products. ICBA member companies do not promote or suggest excessive, irresponsible consumption or illegal behavior.
- As with all other beverages, ICBA member companies are committed to providing consumers with smaller portion sizes. For example, the most commonly sold package size globally for energy drinks is 250 ml which contains approximately the same amount of caffeine as a homebrewed coffee^{viii} and the same amount of sugar as a similarly-sized orange or apple juice^{ix}.
- ICBA member companies ensure that consumers are informed about the levels of caffeine in the beverage but strive to do so in a manner that doesn't imply that increasing levels of caffeine improve the functionality of the product.
- Although normal consumption of energy drinks can have a hydration effect, ICBA member companies do not market energy drinks as beverages that would replace fluids lost during intense physical activity/exercise.
- ICBA member companies provide consumers information about energy drinks and their responsible consumption through a variety of mechanisms, including websites and leaflets. ICBA member companies are committed to ensuring that consumers have access to information including but not limited to: the characteristic ingredients in energy drinks, how the caffeine content of these products relates to other caffeine-containing foods and beverages, and a portion guide to help consumers.

ICBA Member Company Commitments Regarding the Labelling, Sales and Marketing of Energy Drinks

Summary of Commitments	
ICBA member companies do not market energy drinks to children.	✓
ICBA member companies do not sell energy drinks in primary and secondary schools.	✓
ICBA member companies do not conduct samplings of energy drinks to children or in child-focused settings such as primary and secondary schools and/or playgrounds.	✓
ICBA member companies provide clear on-pack information on caffeine content to consumers, often going beyond standard regulatory requirements.	✓
ICBA member companies promote responsible and moderate consumption through a number of means, including among others marketing, portion guidance, and labeling information.	✓
ICBA member companies do not promote or suggest excessive, irresponsible consumption or illegal behavior.	✓
ICBA member companies include an advisory statement on the label regarding special populations. Such a statement may read “Not recommended for children or pregnant or breast-feeding women” and/or “Consume moderately” or similar language.	✓

References

ⁱ Given the specific formulation of energy drinks, it is ICBA's position that the use of the term "energy drink" as part of the statement of identity adequately and appropriately informs the consumer as to the type of product, and the ingredients that are expected to be present. This is because

- for many years, commercially available non-alcoholic beverages have been lawfully marketed under the name "energy drink" in more than 175 countries around the world;
- they are understood (and expected) by consumers to contain other substances that contribute to mental alertness/energy (e.g. caffeine, vitamins, guarana and other plant extracts);
- while most products marketed as "energy drinks" also provide calories, consumers do not associate such products exclusively with caloric energy and therefore do not expect caloric energy to be the only or distinctive product attribute;
- the denomination "energy drink" has been accepted by regulatory authorities, for example in the Member States of the European Union, Switzerland, Ecuador and Canada.

ⁱⁱ In a few countries these products are also called "formulated caffeinated beverages" or similar.

ⁱⁱⁱ EFSA 2015, Wikoff, D., et al., Systematic review of the potential adverse effects of caffeine consumption in healthy adults, pregnant women, adolescents, and children, Food and Chemical Toxicology (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.fct.2017.04.002> et al.

^{iv} Canadean Global Beverage Forecasts, 2013.

^v Canadean Global Forecasts, 2017.

^{vi} [Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources added to Food on a request from the European Commission to the European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\) on the use of taurine and D-glucurono- \$\beta\$ -lactone as constituents of the so-called "energy" drinks, adopted on 15 January 2009.](#)

^{vii} The age of "children" is defined as under 12 years old in accordance with ICBA's Guidelines on Marketing to Children, available at <http://www.icba-net.org/files/resources/finalicbaguidelinesmarketingtochildren.pdf>.

^{viii} According to the [European Food Safety Authority](#), 75-80 milligrams of caffeine in a single serve is all that is required to achieve the functional effect that energy drinks provide.

^{ix} Food Chemistry, H.-D. Belitz, W. Grosch, P. Schieberle, third edition (2004), Springer-Verlag, Stiftung Warentest (7/2012).