

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/206
COMPLAINANT	T Walding
ADVERTISER	New Zealand Fire Service
ADVERTISEMENT	New Zealand Fire Service, Radio
DATE OF MEETING	3 July 2017
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The NZ Fire Service radio advertisement for smoke alarms featured on The Hits radio station said "In a fire, working smoke alarms are your only voice. Make sure you install photo-electric smoke alarms throughout your home and check they're working often. Visit Fire.org.nz" A soft siren can be heard in the background during the final line of dialogue.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, T Walding, said: On Saturday 24 June 2017 at approx 10:16am on the Hits radio station an ad about fire alarms which played the sound of an emergency vehicle siren. I think siren sounds should be banned from all radio ads as they can be quite distracting for drivers and would cause anxiety and potential to make unsafe decisions on the basis of hearing the siren and trying to figure out where it's coming from.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 11, Rule 12.

The Chair acknowledged the Complainant's concern that it was irresponsible to use a siren sound on the radio, which can be distracting and potentially dangerous for drivers.

The Chair noted a previous Chairman's Ruling regarding a similar issue, where a siren sound was included. That decision (12/471) said, in part:

"Turning to the advertisement, the Acting Chairman considered it was evident that the short burst of the sound effect was part of the advertisement, and not a real emergency. He was of the view that using a common attention-grabbing technique, such as the use of sirens, was unlikely to prevent the public from being alert to a real emergency. As such, the Acting Chairman considered that the use of the sirens in this instance did not reach the threshold to constitute a breach of Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics, and the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and society."

Taking the above ruling into account and turning to the advertisement before her, the Chair said the advertisement's subject matter of fire alarms had been given sufficient explanation before any siren sounded in the advertisement. The Chair said the siren in the advertisement was a smoke detector, rather than an emergency vehicle siren.

The Chair also took into account the advertisement was on behalf of the NZ Fire Service, promoting the importance of smoke alarms.

While the Chair noted the concerns of the Complainant regarding the use of siren sounds and the level of distraction this could cause, the Chair said the advertisement before her did not reach the threshold to breach the Code of Ethics.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**