

Tips on Writing a Letter of Concern

1. Decide whether you want to write to the company selling the products or the company that advertised them. Using the company's website, find their mailing address and the name of the head of the company.
2. State your full name and address. This is important for your concerns to be taken seriously.
3. Include all details about the media you are writing about -- state who the advertiser is, what you heard or saw, and when and where you saw the media, including date and time.
4. Be clear and specific about what your concern is. It is easy to state that the ad or image was offensive or disturbing, but you should identify why and how the image concerns you.
5. Be polite. As annoyed as you are, it is important to write a clear letter. Do not use angry words; this is important to ensure your concerns are taken seriously. Focus your criticism in a constructive way.
6. Suggest alternatives. Think of and propose other ways the broadcaster or advertiser could present the media image.
7. Outline what your demands are and what you plan to do. If you are going to stop buying a product, watching a TV show or listening to a station, it is important to state that in your letter.
8. Ask for a response to your concerns. Include a time frame. Although they may not respond in time, making this request shows that you want action now.

Sample Letter

Sally Jones
6 Main Street
Milford, MA 01757

Mary Smith, Editor
Pretty Magazine
123 Path Circle
New York, NY 54321

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to complain about an advertisement for Smokey's Cigarettes that I saw in the September issue of Pretty Magazine. The ad shows attractive, thin, and well-dressed models smoking and I am concerned that this sends the message that smoking is glamorous. When people smoke they are at risk for heart attacks, strokes, and lung cancer; none of those diseases are glamorous.

I hope that you will stop advertising cigarettes in your magazine. Maybe you could even print an article on the dangers of smoking?

Please write back within two weeks and let me know whether you plan to continue advertising cigarettes. Until I hear from you or learn that you have stopped advertising cigarettes, I will not buy any more copies of your magazine.

Sincerely,
Sally Jones

