



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **McMaster Launches PSA Campaign On Video Game Ratings**

***New Ads Explain and Encourage Parents to Use ESRB Ratings to  
Choose Age-Appropriate Games for their Families***

COLUMBIA, SC – South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster today announced a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign to explain and encourage parents to use video game ratings, which are assigned by the non-profit Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). In the [TV](#) and [radio](#) ads, McMaster urges parents to check the rating each time they purchase or rent a video game to ensure that it is appropriate for their children and family, as well as to set the parental controls on their game system.

“I know parents face tough decisions these days about the media they allow into their homes,” said General McMaster. “There’s simply no substitute for parental involvement and responsibility, and it’s important that parents play an active role in choosing games for their children. ESRB ratings are an effective and informative resource that allows parents to decide if the video game their child wants is appropriate. I’m proud to be educating parents in our state about the tools at their disposal.”

The public service announcements are being provided to radio and television stations and local cable TV operators statewide. ESRB has also prepared a [brochure](#) providing additional information about the rating system.

“Video games are no different than movies and TV shows in that they are created for a diverse audience of all ages,” said ESRB president Patricia Vance. “That is why it is so important that parents remember to check the rating when purchasing games for their children. I’m pleased to be joining Attorney General McMaster in announcing his effort to reach out to South Carolina’s parents and educate them about the ratings.”

The ESRB video game ratings employ a two-part system. As seen in the illustration below, rating symbols on the front of virtually every game package sold at retail provide an age recommendation, such as EC (Early Childhood 3+), E (Everyone 6+), E10+ (Everyone 10 and up), T (Teen 13+) and M (Mature 17+). On the back of each package, next to the rating, are content descriptors that provide information about what’s in the game that may have triggered the rating, or may be of interest or concern to parents.



Since its inception in 1994, the ESRB ratings have become a trusted resource for parents when choosing computer and video games. In April 2007, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) released a report<sup>1</sup> which found that nine in ten parents are aware of the ESRB ratings, 87% expressed satisfaction, and nearly three quarters use them regularly when choosing games for their children.

“While many parents are aware of the ratings, and are making sensible game purchase decisions as a result, there is always more that can be done to raise awareness,” added McMaster. “Working with ESRB, these ads will help arm parents with the information they need to make the right choices about the video games they deem appropriate for their children and families.”

ESRB recently announced the availability of “rating summaries,” a supplementary source of information which explain in objective terms the context and relevant content that factored into a game’s ESRB rating assignment. A new mobile website at [m.esrb.org](http://m.esrb.org) was launched to allow parents to search for rating summaries on their cell phones right from the store when trying to make a decision about which game to buy. Parents can also find rating summaries before they go to the store by searching on ESRB’s website at [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org), using ESRB’s [rating search widget](#), or signing up for a free e-newsletter called [ParenTools](#), which provides a list of recently rated titles complete with rating summaries customized to their preference of rating categories and game platform.

A complete list of ratings, content descriptors and their definitions can be found on the ESRB website at [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Trade Commission Report to Congress on the Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children, April 2007