



ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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**ESRB RETAIL COUNCIL (ERC) ESTABLISHES UNPRECEDENTED
“COMMITMENT TO PARENTS” WITH NATIONAL VIDEO GAME RETAILERS**
*ERC Members Agree to Restrict Mature-rated Video Game Sales and
Bolster Ratings Education*

WASHINGTON, DC – Major retailers accounting for approximately 80% of computer and video game sales today joined with the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) in announcing their adoption of an unprecedented commitment aimed at enhancing compliance with store enforcement policies regarding the sale of Mature-rated video games, providing parents with the ability to return or exchange games sold to their children in violation of those policies, and educating customers about ESRB video game ratings. The commitment was announced at a press conference on Capitol Hill with Senators Rick Santorum (R-PA), George Allen (R-VA) and Mark Pryor (D-AR), ESRB president Patricia Vance, National PTA deputy executive director Kimberly Barnes-O’Connor, Entertainment Merchants Association (EMA) president Bo Andersen and Entertainment Software Association (ESA) president Doug Lowenstein.

“The ESRB Retail Council’s ‘Commitment to Parents’ represents a tremendous and concrete step forward by retailers to vigorously enforce their store policies, address customer complaints and help ensure that consumers, especially parents, make informed purchase decisions for their families,” said ESRB president Patricia E. Vance. “While retailers have individually made great and laudable strides in both store policy enforcement and consumer education, the ERC enables leading retailers to work together to improve compliance and better serve their customers.”

“National PTA commends the ESRB for joining forces with major video game retailers to continue improving the enforcement of ESRB ratings. National PTA supports the ‘Commitment to Parents’ and feels it will help parents monitor children’s exposure to electronic media,” said Anna Weselak, National PTA president. “The goal is for parents to make informed decisions on media and technology for their children and families.”

The ESRB Retail Council (ERC) includes video game retailers Best Buy, Blockbuster, Circuit City, GameStop/EB Games, Movie Gallery/Hollywood Video/Game Crazy, Target, and Wal-Mart, representing over 20,000 retail locations. In addition to enforcing store policies and implementing ratings education programs and in-store signage, ERC members have agreed to:

- participate in two “mystery shopper” audits each year to measure and track the level of sales policy enforcement;
- train store associates about ESRB ratings and game sales procedures/policies;
- provide ESRB ratings in circulars, on websites and in other promotional vehicles;
- establish a mechanism for consumer redress for non-compliance with sales procedures/policies; and
- share best practices with other members.

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“We’re deeply proud of the dedication and enthusiasm with which the ERC member retailers continue to work toward ensuring that video game rentals and sales are conducted responsibly,” said Bo Andersen, president of the Entertainment Merchants Association. “This comprehensive program demonstrates in the most tangible way how truly genuine their commitment is, and parents will recognize benefit from it.”

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently reported that retailers are increasingly enforcing their voluntary restriction of M-rated games sales. In its most recent mystery shopper study, the FTC found that national retailers refused to sell M-rated games to minors 65% of the time, which closely matches the level of restriction for movie theatres, which has been considered the “gold standard.”

"We are very pleased that so many retailers have signed on to the 'Commitment to Parents' initiative, which represents an important pledge on their part to ensure that their voluntary systems to restrict sales of Mature games to minors are as effective as possible, " said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the trade group representing U.S. computer and video game publishers. “We are also deeply thankful to Senators Santorum, Allen and Pryor for their long-standing efforts to ensure that when it comes to video games, a combination of credible ratings, retailer enforcement, and parental control technology will make parents the ultimate winners.”

A copy of the ERC “Commitment to Parents” is attached.

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About Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

The ESRB is a non-profit, self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). ESRB independently applies computer and video game content ratings, enforces advertising guidelines, and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices for the interactive entertainment software industry.



RETAIL COUNCIL

Commitment to Parents

The leading video game retailers in the United States and the ESRB are committed to helping parents decide which computer and video games are appropriate for their children and family. To accomplish this, we commit to using our best efforts to:

1. *Displaying signage in stores describing the ESRB rating system for computer and video games and retailer's store policy restricting the sale and rental of M (Mature) and AO (Adults Only) rated games;*
2. *Enforcing retailer's store policy not to sell or rent M (Mature) or AO (Adults Only) rated computer and video games to customers under the age of 17 or 18 respectively;*
3. *Providing training for store associates on the ESRB rating system and the store policy so that they can better assist customers;*
4. *Participating in at least two ERC mystery shopper audits each year measuring the level of store policy enforcement and the display of ESRB rating and store policy signage;*
5. *Resolving complaints received directly from customers, or forwarded from ESRB's website (www.ESRB.org), arising from an ERC member's non-compliance with their store policy not to sell or rent M (Mature) and AO (Adults Only) rated games to children under the age of 17 or 18 respectively by providing a full refund or an exchange for an age-appropriate game to the customer;*
6. *Providing ESRB ratings in circulars, on retailer websites, and in other vehicles ERC retail members use to promote computer and video games;*
7. *Sharing best practices about ESRB rating information and store policy enforcement with other ERC members;*
8. *Appointing a management-level representative from each ERC member company to serve on the ERC and participate in meetings to discuss and implement ERC policy within their respective organization;*
9. *Collectively reporting and publicly making available the status of priority initiatives at least once per calendar year;*

ESRB RETAIL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- **Best Buy**
- **Blockbuster**
- **Circuit City**
- **GameStop / EB Games**
- **Movie Gallery / Hollywood Video / GameCrazy**
- **Target**
- **Wal-Mart**