

What you need to know to stay compliant with Google Ads



GOOGLE COMPLIANCE

Everything you need to be sure your
business is compliant with Google Ads

Who is StubGroup

HELLO THERE! I'M JOHN.

As the CEO of StubGroup, I've witnessed firsthand the power and potential pitfalls businesses can hit regarding Google compliance. That is precisely why we've created this guide.

At StubGroup, we have navigated over 15,000 campaigns across various industries including ecommerce, B2B, and local services, generating significant revenue for our clients. Our experience has taught us the importance of understanding and adhering to Google Ads policies to prevent suspensions and maximize ad performance.

This guide aims to demystify Google's advertising regulations and highlight the essential aspects that impact your ads. Compliance is not just about following rules—it's crucial for maintaining campaign integrity and optimizing performance. Whether you're a seasoned marketer or a business owner venturing into digital ads, this guide will help you understand how to keep your ads compliant, ensuring a smooth experience on Google Ads.



John Horn

CHAPTER N.1

The Basics of Google's Policies & Compliance



Google's advertising policies are designed to ensure a safe and positive experience for both users and advertisers. Implementing safeguards such as disabling ads personalization helps protect young users.

The Core Four Policy Themes

Understanding the intricacies of their policies is key for anyone looking to utilize Google Ads effectively. The policies are categorized into four main themes, each addressing different aspects of content and practices across Google's services.

By understanding these overarching categories, you can create campaigns that align with Google's standards and avoid common pitfalls that lead to ad disapprovals or account suspensions.

1. PROHIBITED CONTENT

This category includes content that Google does not allow to be advertised on its platform. Ads that feature or promote illegal products, offensive material, or other explicitly banned content fall under this prohibition and are strictly enforced by Google to maintain a safe environment for all users.

2. PROHIBITED PRACTICES

These are specific actions that advertisers are forbidden to engage in. Such practices often include deceptive conduct, such as misrepresenting products or services and manipulating ad formats in ways that could confuse or deceive users.

3. RESTRICTED CONTENT AND FEATURES

Some types of content are not outright banned but face certain restrictions. Google allows the advertising of these contents conditionally, depending on factors such as the geographic location of the ad's audience or the nature of the product or service being advertised. Advertisers must often obtain special permissions or adhere to specific guidelines to advertise these restricted items.

4. EDITORIAL AND TECHNICAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Google requires that all ads, websites, and apps meet high standards of quality and functionality. This includes correct spelling, proper grammar, and the technical performance of a website or app. Google uses a combination of AI and human evaluation to ensure that ads comply with policies, taking action on content that violates their policies. Ads must not only be free from errors but also be designed to provide a good user experience, aligning with Google's commitment to delivering quality content to its users.

CHAPTER N.2

The BIG List of Google Ads Policies

Key Google Policies and Guidelines

Google's ad policies require a basic understanding of what is allowed and what isn't for the various categories. Each category has with specific guidelines that need to be followed to avoid any potential flags or suspensions from Google.

To start, creating a safe and positive experience for audiences while promoting your products and services, no matter your industry is crucial. Let's explore some of Google's key policies and guidelines.

1. AD FORMAT REQUIREMENTS
 2. DATA COLLECTION AND USE
 3. PERSONALIZED ADVERTISING
 4. CUSTOMER MATCH POLICY
 5. MISREPRESENTATION AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES
 6. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT
 7. MALICIOUS SOFTWARE
 8. COMPROMISED SITES
 9. UNWANTED SOFTWARE
 10. UNFAIR ADVANTAGE
 11. EVASIVE AD CONTENT
 12. ALCOHOL ADVERTISING
 13. COPYRIGHT AND COUNTERFEIT GOODS
 14. CRYPTOCURRENCIES AND RELATED PRODUCTS
 15. DANGEROUS PRODUCTS OR SERVICES
 16. FINANCIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
 17. GAMBLING AND GAMES
 18. HEALTHCARE AND MEDICINES
 19. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS & SERVICES
 20. FAILED VERIFICATION
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1. AD FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

Advertisers must adhere to specific guidelines regarding the content and duration of their ads. For text ads, inappropriate content or misleading information is not allowed. Video ads have duration limits and must not collect user data, ensuring that all communications are transparent and respect user privacy.

2. DATA COLLECTION AND USE

Protecting user privacy and ensuring transparency in how data is collected, used, and shared is a cornerstone of Google Ads policies. Advertisers must be clear about the nature of the data they collect and must secure express consent from users where necessary, especially when handling sensitive information.

3. PERSONALIZED ADVERTISING

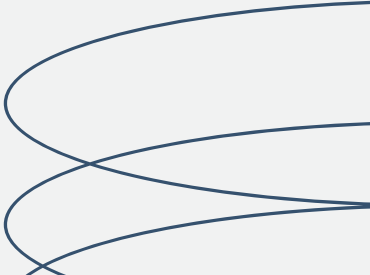
When targeting ads personally, especially in sensitive categories like health, advertisers must handle the data respectfully, including implementing safeguards such as disabling ads personalization to protect users under age 18, and in compliance with legal restrictions. Misuse of personal data or targeting based on sensitive personal hardships is prohibited.

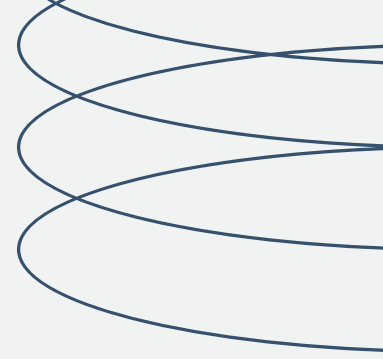
4. CUSTOMER MATCH POLICY

Using customer data for targeting involves strict compliance with Google's policies. Advertisers must have explicit permission to use customer data and should ensure that the data is used ethically for creating or excluding audiences in ad campaigns.

5. MISREPRESENTATION AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES

Honesty is mandatory in all advertisements on Google. Google strictly prohibits any practices that could mislead or deceive users. This includes making false claims about products or services, presenting misleading pricing information, or asserting qualifications or endorsements that the advertiser does not possess. Additionally, advertising counterfeit goods is a severe violation that can lead to immediate suspension. Ensuring all claims are truthful and verifiable helps maintain compliance and protect user trust.





6. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Google Ads does not allow content that could be considered offensive, sexually explicit, or derogatory. This policy extends to content that exploits sensitive events or promotes hate speech, violence, or discrimination.

7. MALICIOUS SOFTWARE

Advertisers must vigilantly check their sites for malicious elements, such as viruses or harmful software, which can lead to suspensions. Google may flag a site as malicious, and identifying the specific issue often involves using third-party tools and a trial-and-error approach to pinpoint and remove the harmful content.

8. COMPROMISED SITES

Sometimes a site may not be intentionally harmful but could still pose security risks due to compromised site tools. It's important for advertisers to address these security issues promptly. Ensuring that customer data is secure and that the site does not inadvertently harm users' devices is crucial.

9. UNWANTED SOFTWARE

Google requires that any software advertised should enhance the user's experience and adhere to good consumer practice standards. This includes clarity about what the software does, transparency in any bundled programs, and ease of uninstallation.

10. UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

Practices such as 'double serving', where advertisers might try to show multiple ads to the same users across different accounts, can be considered an attempt to gain an unfair advantage in ad visibility. Google discourages such practices and may penalize advertisers for attempting to manipulate ad visibility unfairly.

11. EVASIVE AD CONTENT

This involves creating ads that attempt to circumvent Google's detection systems. Tactics like using misspellings of prohibited words or misleading visuals to avoid detection are prohibited. Ads should be straightforward and not attempt to trick the system.

12. ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

The advertising of alcohol on Google is heavily regulated and varies significantly by country. Advertisers must comply with local laws and Google's guidelines, which may include restrictions on the types of alcoholic beverages advertised and how they are presented. For instance, ads must not target minors and should include disclaimers about alcohol content.

13. COPYRIGHT AND COUNTERFEIT GOODS

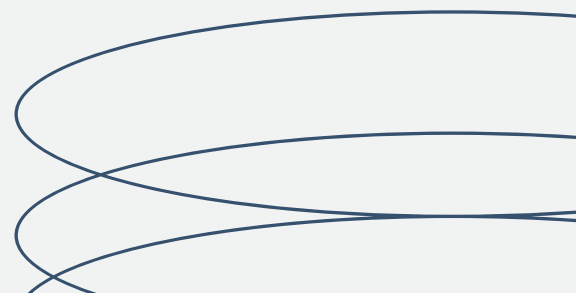
All advertised content must be authorized and genuine. Google strictly prohibits the advertising of counterfeit goods. This includes any items that mimic or replicate the trademarks and products of other brands without permission. Advertisers must ensure they have the necessary rights to sell or promote all advertised products.

14. CRYPTOCURRENCIES AND RELATED PRODUCTS

Google provides specific guidelines regarding the advertising of cryptocurrencies and related products. As of the latest updates, advertising for direct purchase, trading, or exchange of cryptocurrencies is prohibited, but informational content and certain ancillary products related to cryptocurrency, such as mining hardware and blockchain services, may be advertised under certain conditions.

15. DANGEROUS PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

Advertising for weapons, explosives, and other hazardous materials is strictly banned on Google Ads. This includes guns, gun parts, combat knives, and any other products that could cause harm to others. Safety devices related to firearms, such as safety locks, may have exceptions, provided they are advertised in a manner that promotes safety and compliance with legal restrictions.





16. FINANCIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Advertising financial products and services on Google requires adherence to stringent guidelines, including providing clear disclosures about fees, the risks involved, and the qualifications of the service providers. Certain financial services, like personal loans, have additional restrictions or requirements, such as disclosing APRs and lender information.

17. GAMBLING AND GAMES

All advertised content must be authorized and genuine. Google strictly prohibits the advertising of counterfeit goods. This includes any items that mimic or replicate the trademarks and products of other brands without permission. Advertisers must ensure they have the necessary rights to sell or promote all advertised products.

18. HEALTHCARE AND MEDICINES

Pharmaceuticals and health services must navigate a complex set of advertising policies, requiring certifications and clear adherence to regulatory guidelines. This includes not promoting prescription drugs without proper authorization and ensuring all health claims are supported by reliable evidence.

19. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS & SERVICES

Advertising government documents and services on Google Ads requires strict compliance with Google's policies to ensure transparency. These ads must clearly represent the service and not mislead users about their affiliation with government agencies. For services like visa processing or passport applications, disclaimers must clarify that they are not officially endorsed unless they are.

19. FAILED VERIFICATION

Verification failures in Google Ads often occur due to inaccurate business details, incomplete documentation, or missing licenses. Common types include Business Operations Verification, Advertiser Verification, and Advanced Verification, particularly affecting industries like locksmiths and garage door repair services. Ensuring all business information is accurate, up-to-date, and properly documented helps maintain compliance and avoid disruptions.

CHAPTER N.3

Why Compliance Matters

Compliance with Google Ads policies is not merely about adhering to rules—it is crucial for the success and sustainability of your advertising efforts on one of the world's largest advertising platforms. Implementing strong privacy protections worldwide is also essential to meet international standards.

Understanding and following these policies helps ensure your campaigns run smoothly and effectively reach your target audience without interruptions. Compliance with laws and regulations in different places worldwide is vital for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of your advertising efforts. Here are key reasons why compliance is essential:



Avoiding Penalties and Suspensions

Non-compliance can lead to a range of punitive actions from Google, including the disapproval of individual ads, the suspension of entire campaigns, or even the banning of advertisers from the platform. Such penalties not only disrupt your current advertising efforts but can also have long-term negative impacts on your brand's reputation and online presence.

Maximizing Advertising Effectiveness

Google's policies are designed to optimize the user experience and create a safe and positive environment for both users and advertisers. Ads that comply with these guidelines are more likely to be well-received by the target audience, leading to better engagement rates and higher conversion potential. Compliance also ensures that your ads reach the right people in the right context, enhancing the overall effectiveness of your marketing campaigns.

Maintaining Brand Integrity

By complying with Google's advertising policies, advertisers uphold high standards of honesty and transparency. This commitment to ethical advertising enhances your brand's credibility and trustworthiness among consumers. It signals to your audience that you respect their safety and privacy, which can lead to increased loyalty and customer retention.

Leveraging Google's Reputation

Google is a trusted name in technology and online services, and its advertising platform is backed by robust security and quality standards. By adhering to Google's policies, advertisers align themselves with these standards, which can enhance their advertisements' perceived value and effectiveness.

Facilitating Long-Term Success

Regular updates to Google Ads policies mean that compliance is an ongoing process. Staying informed about the latest changes and understanding how they affect your advertising strategies is crucial for long-term success.

Proactive compliance helps avoid future issues that could arise from policy changes, ensuring that your advertising efforts continue to perform well without costly interruptions or adjustments.



CHAPTER N.4

FAQS

Google Compliance FAQ's

MY GOOGLE ADS ACCOUNT HAS BEEN COMPROMISED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If your Google Ads account is compromised, promptly change your passwords and report the incident to Google. If the account suspension is a result of compromise, submit a clear and transparent appeal to Google, detailing the breach, campaigns created by the hacker, and other relevant information for a swift resolution and account reactivation. Accounts that are suspended due to a compromise are something we at StubGroup have lots of experience in working with and are well equipped to resolve.

ARE THERE TOOLS OR SERVICES THAT CAN HELP ME AUDIT MY ADS OR WEBSITE FOR POLICY COMPLIANCE?

We believe that the best way to ensure that your ad account and website comply with Google's policies is help from an experienced agency like StubGroup. Our team members have experience in all of Google's policies and can spot policy issues in both ad accounts and websites with more expertise than scanning tools can.

WHAT IS ADVERTISER VERIFICATION?

Advertiser verification is a process implemented by Google and other advertising and social platforms to verify the identity and legitimacy of advertisers. It involves submitting documentation and information to confirm the legal entity behind the advertising account, ensuring compliance with advertising policies and regulations. Advertiser verification helps maintain transparency, credibility, and trust in online advertising by reducing the risk of fraudulent or misleading ads.

CAN I GET A REFUND FROM GOOGLE IF MY ACCOUNT IS SUSPENDED?

Google will not refund you money that has already been spent on ads. If you preloaded funds into your account, Google will refund to you any funds that have not yet been spent. You can initiate this by canceling the Google Ads account.

WHEN LOOKING FOR ISSUES GOOGLE MAY HAVE WITH MY ADS ACCOUNT, WHERE SHOULD I START?

When looking for issues Google may have with my Ads account, where should I start? Finding the best place to start depends on the type of suspension but there are three main things we recommend checking at the start:

1. Do you own multiple Google Ads accounts that share information?
2. Is the address and name on the payment profile up to date and does it coincide with the information for your payment method?
3. Are there major policy issues listed under "Policy Issues"?

IF MY ACCOUNT IS SUSPENDED, DOES IT AFFECT MY OTHER GOOGLE SERVICES?

While a Google Ads account suspension primarily impacts your ability to run advertising campaigns on the Google Ads platform, it typically does not directly affect other Google services. However, if you have a Google Merchant Center account linked to your suspended Google Ads account, it is possible for your Google Merchant Center account to be suspended.

HOW CAN I ENHANCE TRUST WITH BOTH GOOGLE AND USERS THROUGH MY BUSINESS OPERATIONS?

To gain more trust with both Google and users, businesses can take several steps to enhance transparency in their operations. This includes maintaining clear and open communication channels, providing comprehensive and accessible policies on your website, and ensuring accuracy in all presented information. By prioritizing transparency in these areas as well as staying up to date with Google's policies, businesses can foster trust, credibility, and positive relationships with both Google and users who visit their site.

Want more insights like this?

Get Your Free Google Ads Audit

Our experts will review your campaigns and guide you through where improvements can be made, the intricacies of Google's advertising policies, and more.

We're here to help you optimize your ads without the hassle.

REQUEST AN AUDIT