

DJ KHALED'S VODKA-SOAKED SNAPCHAT POSTS 'VIOLATE FEDERAL LAW'

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DJ Khaled has stopped advertising alcohol brands in his Snapchat stories after watchdogs complained his posts violated federal law.



DJ Khaled has come under fire for promoting Ciroc vodka on his Snapchat account.

Regulators sent a letter to Khaled in March 2018 warning him that his posts about Ciroc vodka and Belaire sparkling wines

Between June 2017 and March this year, an investigation by research group Truth In Advertising (TINA) cataloged more than 100 instances in which DJ Khaled posted Snapchat stories promoting various alcoholic drinks — including Diageo's Ciroc vodka, Bacardi's D'Usse cognac, and Sovereign Brands' Belaire sparkling wines and Bumbu rum — to Khaled's more than 6 million Snapchat followers, many of whom are under the age of 21.

TINA claimed that the producer promoted these brands without disclosing his material connection to the alcohol companies.

The letter, which was written by TINA on behalf of Public Citizen, Alcohol Justice, US Alcohol Policy Alliance, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, The Center for Digital Democracy, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said that Khaled and his sponsors “violated the alcohol marketing policies on the most popular social media platforms to deliver alcohol ads to underage users more than 100 times on Snapchat; over 190 times on Instagram; 30-plus times on Facebook; and nearly 20 times on Twitter.

“For the vast majority of these ads, Khaled failed to disclose his material connections to the alcohol brands. The deceptive impact and societal harm resulting from these risky and irresponsible ads cannot be overstated.”

Since the letter was sent, Khaled has significantly scaled down his drinks posts. A number of unmarked drinks-focused photos on Instagram appear to have been deleted, while those that feature spirits and wine are now marked with the hashtag #AD.

“DJ Khaled has done the right thing by disclosing his material connection to these alcohol brands,” said TINA.org executive director Bonnie Patten. “Time will tell if he is truly committed to ensuring that his followers are not misled by deceptive ads on his social media accounts. As for the alcohol companies, their failure to make certain that DJ Khaled complied with FTC law is absolutely inexcusable.”

“As an influential music icon with a substantial youth following, DJ Khaled’s move to discontinue alcohol promotion and appropriately label social media ads was overdue,” said Kristen Strader, campaign coordinator for Public Citizen. “Hopefully, DJ Khaled and other influencers will do right by their fans and label all paid endorsements on social media moving forward.”

Khaled — who has even been [immortalised in sparkling wine with his own-branded wine of Belaire bottles](#) — regularly garners several million views on each social media post. While Snapchat does not disclose the percentage of users under 21, the platform’s appeal to teens is well documented.

Although Snapchat users must be at least 13 to own an account, a recent Ofcom report found that a significant amount of users may be far younger. This means that many users who are registered as 18 or over are likely to be underage, which has also caused drinks brands to face scrutiny over their use of the app in the past.

Earlier this year the UK’s Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) banned a Snapchat filter [promoting Captain Morgan rum](#), ruling it could appeal to under 18s.

The filter was designed to make the user take on the appearance of Captain Morgan with two glasses of alcoholic drinks clinking together on screen.

Diageo argued that the advert was both historically accurate and consistent with the rum maker’s trade mark, adding that the Captain Morgan lens used “age-gated targeting” to ensure that the lens was only delivered to users over the legal drinking age, but the ASA ruled that Diageo did not take sufficient steps to prevent the Snapchat filter from appealing to children.