Appendix 1
Draft Revised Access Rules

Draft Revised Access Rules

Contents

1.   Introduction

The Broadcasting Act 2009 makes a number of provisions in respect of rules to be made by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) to promote the understanding and enjoyment of programmes by persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, persons who are blind or partially sighted and persons who are hard of hearing and are partially sighted.

The relevant sections are 43(1)(c), 43(2), 43(3) and 43(6) of the Broadcasting Act 2009. Broadcasters must also have regard to Section 8 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017. These statutory provisions are detailed at Appendix 3.

In accordance with these provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the BAI hereby sets out the following Rules.

2.   Scope and Jurisdiction

Television broadcasters based within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland must comply with the provisions of the Access Rules. The Rules shall not apply to other services commonly received in this State but licensed in the United Kingdom or in other jurisdictions. The Rules shall not apply to non-broadcast content, including content provided via on-demand players provided by broadcasters and which are available online. Notwithstanding this, the BAI recognises that broadcasters provide accessible programming via on-demand players and welcomes the continuation, increase or further introduction of such provision online.

3. Setting Targets and Timeframes

In setting targets and timeframes for the provision of access services, the BAI will do so with reference to the Access Principles and Influencing Factors that it has developed and which are set out at Appendix 1.

The BAI reserves the right to extend the Rules to include additional television services regulated by the BAI under the Broadcasting Act 2009, over the operating period of these Rules. This includes services licensed in the State but targeting countries outside of the Republic of Ireland. The BAI will make this assessment on a case-by-case basis having regard to the Access Principles and Influencing Factors.

4. Definitions

A number of terms are used throughout the Rules. These terms are set out and defined below.

Subtitling

Subtitling is on-screen text that represents what is being said on the television screen. Subtitling can be open or closed. Open subtitling is subtitling that remains on the screen at all times. Closed subtitling can be made visible or not visible as viewers wish, using, for example, a remote control. Subtitling is formatted so as to assist interpretation and understanding of the text and link it more accurately to the on-screen action.

Captioning

Captioning refers to on-screen text that represents what is being said on the television screen. However, while similar to subtitling, it is not as sophisticated and entails a more basic representation of what is being said on screen, sometimes having only one colour, verbatim and can have the text only in upper case.

Irish Sign Language

Irish Sign Language is the indigenous language of the Deaf community in Ireland. It is a visual, spatial language with its own syntax and complex grammatical structure. Signing must be presented on a television screen through the use of a signer as part of the programme content, or the use of a signer (either a real person or a virtual person generated by computer) acting as an interpreter in a box superimposed in the corner of the screen.

Audio Description

Audio description is a commentary that gives a viewer with a visual impairment a verbal description of what is happening on the television screen at any given moment, as an aid to the understanding and enjoyment of the programme. The technique uses a second sound track that gives a description of the scene and the on-screen action.

5.   General Rules Applying to All Access Provision

5.1   Quality Standards: The objective of these Rules is to promote the understanding and enjoyment of television programmes. This is achieved via the provision of subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description. In this context, the BAI has developed standards that will apply to the provision of access services. These standards are provided at Appendix 2 and broadcasters shall comply with these standards.

Maintaining quality access provision is essential for ensuring that audiences using these services benefit and broadcasters shall take steps to monitor content at the time of transmission to ensure quality standards are met.

5.2   National Emergencies: In order to ensure that audience members requiring assistive services are kept informed about national emergencies, broadcasters shall ensure that any key information provided by the Irish government on-air, including relevant telephone numbers etc., is subtitled (preferably in an open format) or spoken, leaving sufficient time to write the details down. Where practicable, it should also be provided via Irish Sign Language.

Broadcasters shall also ensure that in coverage of events, news conferences etc., at which Irish Sign Language interpreters are in attendance, the interpreters shall be clearly visible and understandable to audiences.

5.3   Promotion of Access Provision: In all promotions of programmes featuring access services and at the beginning of the broadcast of any such programme, broadcasters shall make use of a standard symbol indicating that the programme is accessible.

Broadcasters shall ensure that any listings created and featured in print, broadcast or online (including via social media) indicate those programmes for which access provision is available and the type of provision, except where it is not possible to do so and where this can be clearly demonstrated.

Broadcasters shall regularly promote on their television services the existence and usage of the form(s) of access provision available on their services.

5.4   Obligation to Consult with Access Users: Broadcasters shall consult periodically and not less than once annually, with groups representing a range of different access user groups, in order to seek their opinions as to their viewing preferences, the performance of the broadcaster against the Rules and other related matters.

5.5   Access Liaison Officer: Broadcasters shall nominate an individual(s) to deal with queries from audiences in respect of the application of these Rules on their service(s).

Information in respect of the name and contact details of the individual(s) shall be publicly available, for example, via the website of the broadcaster.

5.6 Carry-over of Targets: Where a broadcaster fails to meet its targets in a given year, the difference between the target achieved and the target required will be carried over into the following year and assessed accordingly. Similarly, where a broadcaster exceeds its required target for a given year, the difference may be off-set against the target for the following year. In each instance, any such carry over will only apply to the following calendar year and may account for no more than 5% of the target set down for the prior year.

6. Subtitling Rules

6.1 Specific subtitling targets have been identified for each broadcast service and broadcasters shall comply with the targets and timeframes applying to their service(s). These are set with reference to the percentage of output that should include subtitling. All targets are based on a five-year timeframe.

In the case of certain broadcasters, reference is also made to targets to be met during peak-time periods (6pm – 11.30pm) and the percentage of programming during this period which should have subtitling.

6.2 In the case of most services, subtitling targets will be assessed based on an 18-hour day from 7am-1am. An exception will apply to any channel where the length of the broadcast day is less than 18 hours. In such circumstances, the subtitling requirement will be measured over the length of the broadcast day of the channel.

6.3 In the case of RTÉ, of the annual percentage increase in subtitling, a proportion shall include children's programming, where applicable.

6.4 Broadcasters are permitted to include some captioning in the attainment of subtitling targets. However, from 2024, captioning will no longer be considered by the BAI when assessing compliance with subtitling targets set out in these Rules.

6.5 Subtitling timeframes and targets for 2019- 2023 are as follows:-

	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
RTÉ 1	87% (95% Peak Time)	88% (95% Peak Time)	Consult		
RTÉ 2	73% (85% Peak Time)	74% (85% Peak Time)	Consult		
Other RTÉ Services	45% of combined output	46% of combined output	Consult		
TV3	51%	53%	Consult		

	(50% Peak Time)	(50% Peak Time)	
Other TV3 Services	50% of combined output	52% of combined output	Consult
TG4	57% (60% Peak Time)	58% (60% Peak Time)	Consult
Eir Sport 1	12%	13%	Consult
+ 1 & HD Channels	Any subtitling carried on the main television service will be made available on +1/HD channels		
Oireachtas TV	16%	18%	Consult
CCTV	11%	11%	Consult
DCTV	11%	11%	Consult

In the case of Other RTÉ services, these are RTÉ Jnr, RTÉ News Now but do not include any +1 or HD channel versions. The BAI may review this percentage if new services are introduced by RTÉ. In the case of other RTÉ services, a minimum of 50% of subtitled output must be children's programming.

In the case of Other TV3 services, these are 3e and Be3 but do not include any +1 or HD channel versions. The BAI may review this target if new services are introduced by TV3. It will be a matter for the broadcaster as to how the access provision will be divided across the relevant channels.

7. Irish Sign Language Rules (ISL)

7.1 Specific ISL targets have been identified for each broadcast service. Relevant broadcasters shall comply with the targets and timeframes applying to their service(s). All targets are based on a five-year timeframe.

7.2 In the case of most services, ISL targets will be assessed by the BAI based on a 24-hour day. An exception will apply to any channel where the length of the broadcast day is less than 24 hours. In such circumstances, the ISL requirement will be measured over the length of the broadcast day of the channel.

7.3 ISL timeframes and targets for the 2019-2023 period are as follows:-

	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
RTÉ 1 & RTÉ 2	3%	3.5%	Consult		
RTÉ Jnr	2%	2.5%	Consult		

RTÉ News Now	Any ISL carried on the main television service will be made available on this service.		
TV3	0%	0.5%	Consult
+1 and HD Channels	Any ISL carried on the main television service will be made available on +1/HD channels.		
Oireachtas TV	4%	5%	Consult

7.4   In the case of Oireachtas TV, ISL provision may be offset against the targets set in these Rules for subtitling on this service.

7.5   In the case of ISL provision aired on broadcast services who do not have a mandatory obligation in this respect, any such voluntary provision may be offset against the targets for subtitling.

7.6   Of the total increase in ISL provision provided on an annual basis, a proportion shall comprise home-produced programming.

8.   Audio Description Rules (AD)

8.1   Specific AD targets have been identified for each broadcast service. Relevant broadcasters shall comply with the targets and timeframes applying to their service(s). All targets are based on a five-year timeframe.

8.2   In the case of most services, AD targets will be assessed by the BAI based on an 18-hour day (7am-1am). An exception will apply to any channel where the length of the broadcast day is less than 18 hours. In such circumstances, the AD requirement will be measured over the length of the broadcast day of the channel.

8.3   AD timeframes and targets for 2019-2023 are as follows:-

	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
RTÉ 1 & RTÉ 2	5%	7%	Consult		
RTÉ Jnr	6%	7%	Consult		
TV3	0%	2%	Consult		
+ 1 and HD Channels	Any AD carried on the main television service will be made available on +1/HD channels.				

8.4   Of the total increase in audio description provision provided on an annual basis, a proportion shall comprise home-produced programming.

8.5 In the case of AD provision aired on broadcasters who do not have a mandatory obligation in this respect, any such voluntary provision may be offset against the targets for subtitling.

9. Complying with these Rules

In evaluating and measuring performance against these Rules, the BAI may undertake some or all of the following activities:-

- Request reports from broadcasters every six-months in respect of the programmes that have been broadcast with accessible content.

- Assess programme content for compliance with the standards developed by the BAI for the provision of subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description and to cross-check broadcaster reports provided against output. The BAI may have regard to the standard of access provision provided when determining the extent to which targets have been attained by broadcasters.

- Seek feedback from the User Consultative Panels established by the BAI. There are two consultative panels in place. Membership of the first panel is open to individuals who are deaf or who are hard of hearing and representatives of organisations that advocate on their behalf. Membership of the second panel is open to individuals who are blind or partially sighted and representatives of organisations that advocate on their behalf.

- Meet with broadcasters on an annual basis to discuss performance against the Rules having had regard to reports provided and the outcomes of monitoring.

- Produce a report annually for the Compliance Committee of the BAI dealing with performance by broadcasters against the Rules.

- Apply the BAI Compliance and Enforcement Policy in instances of apparent non-compliance with the Access Rules.

- Publish an annual report detailing compliance by broadcasters with the Access Rules.

- In addition to the above, the BAI reserves the right to review and amend this approach or apply other appropriate mechanisms in assessing performance as required.

10. Complaints

Audience members should refer a complaint directly to the relevant broadcaster, in the first instance, if they are dissatisfied with the manner in which a broadcaster is complying with the Rules.

If audience members are not satisfied with the response provided by the broadcaster, then they may refer the matter to the BAI by emailing access@bai.ie.

11. Support for the Implementation of the Rules

The BAI will support the implementation of the Access Rules on an ongoing basis.

The specific support measures adopted during the operational period of these Rules will be agreed by the BAI following consultation with broadcasters, access users and organisations representing their interests. Support measures may include capacity building activities and measures related to the promotion and awareness of the Rules and their importance and value to audiences.

12. Effective Date

The Rules come into effect from 1st January 2019.

13. Guidance on the Rules for Broadcasters

The BAI will provide general non-binding guidance regarding the provisions of these Rules.

Requests for such guidance must be submitted by email, including where relevant, a copy of the programme. The submission should clearly state the section(s) of the Rules, which the requestor believes are relevant, and set out the specific question about which the requestor would like a view.

The BAI accepts no liability for any decision (or consequences arising) made by a broadcaster to defer the airing of content pending receipt of guidance from the BAI.

Similarly, the BAI accepts no liability for any decision (or consequences arising) made by a broadcaster to air content following receipt of non-binding general guidance from the BAI.

14. Review of the Access Rules

These Rules are scheduled for review in 2021 and 2023 but the BAI retains the discretion to review the Rules, or part thereof, prior to the scheduled dates.

Appendix 1

Access Principles and Influencing Factors

Access Principles

There are four access principles which set out the aims of the Access Rules and the BAI's approach towards setting the rules. The four principles are:-

i) Access

A guiding principle for the BAI is that those citizens for whom the Access Rules are designed should have the fullest possible access to the broadcast media and to its capacity to educate, inform and entertain. This principle is evident in the Access Rules in that all indigenous broadcasters come under the jurisdiction of the rules.

ii) Excellence

This principle recognises the fact that the Access Rules are not only concerned with the provision of subtitling, audio description and Irish Sign Language but also with the standards and consistency which must be used and attained in their delivery, including best practice guidelines in both audio and visual presentation. To this end, the BAI has developed a set of standards and guidelines that broadcasters must attain to ensure a quality access service.

iii)   Incremental progression

This principle acknowledges that the level of subtitling, audio description and Irish Sign Language will develop incrementally over a period of time. This will facilitate broadcasters to further develop their capacity and expertise to deliver this service. The use of a five-year timeframe in the Access Rules is based on the principle of increasing access provision in incremental stages, allowing the broadcaster to plan for the development and delivery of quality access provision. It acknowledges that there are a number of issues other than funding which need to be addressed in order to increase access provision.

iv)   Responsiveness

This principle aims to ensure that the development of access provision (subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description) should be in response to the needs and priorities as expressed by the user groups as well as standards laid down by the BAI, in consultation with the broadcast provider.

Influencing Factors

Bearing in mind the Access Principles, the influencing factors are those used by the BAI to determine the specific access targets and the specific timeframes associated with those targets, in a manner which reflect the individuality of each service under consideration.

The influencing factors are as follows:

a.   Differentiation between broadcast services

The Access Rules differentiate between broadcasters based on a number of factors. These factors are:

i)   The nature of the broadcast provider

Is the broadcasting service a public or private service? Is the broadcaster in receipt of public monies and as a result has greater public service duties? Does the broadcaster have specific aims which might impact on its ability to provide access services?

ii)   The stage of development of the broadcast provider

How long has the broadcaster been in operation? How much experience does the broadcaster have of providing access services? Is there already a level of expertise within the broadcasting service in the provision of access services? What is their share of viewing in the market?

iii)   The level of current provision

What level of subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description does the broadcaster currently provide? What is their starting point?

iv)   Type of programming schedule

Does the broadcast service produce live programming? Does it acquire a lot of programming from other broadcasters? How much home produced programming does the broadcaster provide? Is programming independently produced?

These questions are relevant, as the type of programming in the schedule has an influence on the cost, technical facilities, personnel and ability of the broadcaster to provide access services. In most cases, subtitles are purchased separately from programming and are not bought as part of the acquired programme.

v)   The technical and human resource cost

What facilities and expertise currently exist within the broadcasting service to provide access services?

vi)   Technical capacity

Does the broadcast service have the technical capacity to provide access services? What level and type of technical facilities and expertise would be required?

b.   Funding

The BAI has had regard to the likely financial impact of any requirement to comply with targets and timeframes set for the provision of access services. In particular, the BAI examined the type of programming across various schedules, including the number of repeat programmes as this has a bearing on the costs. The BAI also had regard to the nature of the broadcaster, whether it is a private commercial or publicly funded entity.

However, it should be noted that it is difficult to arrive at definitive costs, as in many instances the cost will depend on the scheduling decisions made by broadcasters, the type of programming and the decisions made with regard to what programming they are going to prioritise for access provision.

Appendix 2

Quality Standards applying to

Subtitling, Irish Sign Language & Audio Description

Introduction

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has set out the rules required under Section 43(1)(c), to which it has given the title *Access Rules*. A copy of the Access Rules is available on www.bai.ie or by request from the Authority.

This is the **BAI Guidelines – Subtitling** document. In this document the BAI outlines the general and technical standards required in relation to subtitling provision. These guidelines are intended to support the implementation of the BAI Access Rules regarding subtitling. The BAI acknowledges the assistance of Ofcom's Guidance on Standards for Subtitling document in the preparation of this document. The guidelines may be changed from time to time, as deemed appropriate.

To assist broadcasters and subtitle providers reading this document, the main points of guidance are printed in bold type. These, however, cannot be properly understood in isolation from the rest of the text.

1.   Key Priorities

The key priorities for effective subtitling can be summarised as follows:

1.1   The viewer should be allowed adequate reading time.

1.2   The viewers enjoyment of the programme is increased when:

     o Subtitles match what is actually said, reflecting the spoken word with the same meaning and complexity; without censoring

     o Subtitles contain all obvious speech and relevant sound effects

     o Subtitles are located sensibly in time and space.

1.3   Subtitles should contain easily-read and commonly-used sentences in a tidy and sensible format.

1.4   Subtitles for children should have regard to the reading age of the intended audience.

2.   General Requirements for Subtitle Display

2.1   Basic Text Display

Teletext characters should be displayed in double height using upper and lower case. Words within a subtitle should be separated by a single space.

Text should always have a high contrast against the background colour and for normal subtitling purposes should be presented in a black box.

Text will usually be centre justified, but to aid readability it can be justified left, centre or right depending on whether speaker positioning is desired.

Standard punctuation should be used. Punctuation gives valuable clues to syntactic structure and must be carefully displayed in order to be effective

2.2 Colour

As used on analogue services the ITU (R) Teletext format is limited to the availability of seven different text colours, including white; and eight different background (boxing) colours, including black and white. For normal subtitling purposes black should be used, but if coloured background is used a text colour should be chosen which will also remain legible on a black background.

The most legible text colours on a black background are white, yellow, cyan and green. The use of magenta, red and blue should be avoided.

If a coloured background is used, the most legible combinations are as follows:

Blue on white;
White on blue;
Red on white;
White on red;
Cyan on blue;
Blue on cyan.

Of these, white on red, white on blue and cyan on blue are preferable, because certain older decoders will reduce these combinations to highly legible white on black, or cyan on black. Colour in television subtitling is used to aid Speaker Identification and indicate the presence of Sound Effects. These are discussed later in this document.

2.3 Control Characters

The use of double-height boxed coloured text generally requires six control characters in the teletext line, or eight control characters if coloured background is used. Thus, the maximum space available for subtitle text is only 32 or 34 characters per line.

2.4 Formatting

A maximum subtitle length of two lines is recommended. Three lines may be used if the subtitler is confident that no important picture information will be obscured. Ideally, each subtitle should also comprise a single complete sentence. Depending on the speed of speech, there are exceptions to this general recommendation, as follows:

a) Real-time subtitling

b) Short sentences may be combined into a single subtitle if the available reading time is limited.

c) Very long sentences which are too long to fit into a single two-line subtitle.
   There are two procedures for dealing with such cases:

   (i) Break long sentences into two or more separate sentences and to display them as consecutive subtitles

(ii) Allow a single long sentence to extend over more than one subtitle. In this case, sentences should be segmented at natural linguistic breaks such that each subtitle forms an integrated linguistic unit. Preference should be given to segmentation at clause boundaries.

Many viewers have found that a segmentation marked by a sequence of dots (three at the end of a to-be-continued subtitle, and two at the beginning of a continuation) is helpful. For example:

> *When I opened the door…*

> *…I realised that I had been in this room before.*

2.5   Punctuation

The effectiveness of punctuation can be enhanced by the use of a single space at the following points:

i)   before exclamation marks and question marks,

ii) after commas, colons, semi-colons and mid-subtitle full-stops,

iii) on both sides of dashes (but not mid-word hyphens),

iv) before opening brackets and inverted commas

v) after closing brackets and inverted commas.

2.6   Line Breaks

Subtitle lines should end at natural linguistic breaks, ideally at clause or phrase boundaries.

Line breaks within a word are especially disruptive to the reading process and should be avoided.

Justified subtitles should balance linguistic considerations with eye movement. Therefore, when using left, right and centre justification for speaker positioning line breaks must be carefully considered. The distance between subtitles should be minimised, that is to say, causing the eye the least distance to travel from one line to the next.

Care should also be taken to avoid disruption to the picture content – long thin lines are preferable to 'short and fat' subtitles, but this is not always the case.

Line breaks on conventional aspect ratio receivers (4:3) and widescreen (16:9) receivers must retain the original emphasis of the subtitle.

2.7   Positioning Subtitles on the Screen

Subtitles are usually positioned towards the bottom of the screen, but it is important that this does not obscure 'on-screen' captions, any part of a speaker's mouth or any other important activity. Certain special programme types carry a lot of information in the lower part of the screen and in such cases top-screen positioning will be a more acceptable standard.

Subtitles should be displayed horizontally in the direction of sound effects source or, in the case where speaker identification is employed, in the direction of the speaker.

When consecutive subtitles have boxes of similar size and shape and the second directly over-writes the first, it is useful to position them slightly differently on the screen. This makes it easier for the viewer to perceive that the subtitle has changed.

Widescreen receivers with a screen ratio of 16:9 are now in common use. When these are used to display subtitles it is important to safeguard the text box. This consideration must include standard receivers of 4:3 aspect ratio. Safeguarding can be achieved by ensuring that subtitles are placed within the 'Safe Caption Area' of a 14:9 display.

3. Timing and Synchronisation

Viewers must be given sufficient time to read the subtitles. The length of time that subtitles are displayed on screen must reflect this. Presentation rates however can depend upon the programme content. For example certain programmes, such as "soaps", where the viewer may have familiarity with the characters, can have faster paced subtitles than an unfamiliar drama or a slower moving documentary.

The subtitle presentation rate for pre-recorded programmes should not normally exceed 160 to 180 words per minute. 160wpm corresponds to 800 characters per minute and uses 2 seconds per line. These speeds are increased to 180wpm when add-ons are used (increasing the reading speed by one eighth again).

All obvious speech should have some form of subtitle accompaniment. Subtitle appearance should coincide with speech onset and subtitle disappearance should coincide with the end of the corresponding speech segment.

Synchronisation should be at naturally occurring pauses in speech-sentence boundaries, or changes of scene.

The same rules of synchronisation should apply with off-camera speakers and even with off-screen narrators.

4.   Shot Changes

Camera-cuts in the middle of a subtitle presentation cause the viewer to return to the beginning of a partially read subtitle and to start re-reading. In practice, it is recognised that the frequency and speed of shot changes in many programmes present serious problems for the subtitler.

General guidance for dealing with camera-cuts are as follows:

i)   Subtitles that are allowed to over-run shot changes can cause considerable perceptual confusion and should be avoided.

ii) Shot changes normally reflect the beginning or end of speech therefore subtitles should commence on a shot change when this is in synchrony with the speaker.

iii) A subtitle should be 'anchored' over a shot change by at least one second to allow the reader time to adjust to the new picture.

i) The insertion of a subtitle less than one second before a camera-cut and its removal less than one second after should be avoided.

ii) Where practical subtitles should be in exact synchrony with a camera-cut.

iii) A decision to segment a single sentence into more than one subtitle, to be placed around a camera-cut, should depend on whether the sentence can be segmented naturally and on whether the resulting subtitles can be allowed sufficient display time.

5.   Special Techniques

5.1 Emphasis and Phrasing

Text in upper case characters can indicate an increase in volume, for example shouting, while emphasis of an individual word can be achieved by a change in colour.

5.2 Tone of Voice

Where tone of voice is particularly critical to meaning, and facial expression and body language are inadequate to convey the tone, the use of '(!)' and '(?)' immediately following speech can indicate sarcasm and irony.

5.3 Speaker Identification

The use of colours to identify individual speakers is particularly helpful although over use is known to confuse. Where possible, therefore, each speaker should be identified by a single colour consistently throughout the programme.

An alternative is to use subtitle screen position and justification to support speaker identification. Each subtitle can be displaced horizontally towards the appropriate speaker although careful positioning will be needed when characters move about while speaking. Colours may still be added.

5.4 Off-Screen and Off-Camera Voices

When the source of off-screen/off-camera speech is not obvious from the visible context, special techniques should be used.

Off-camera speakers are effectively indicated by using the 'greater than' (>) or 'less than' (<) symbols as appropriate.

When off-screen speech is employed throughout the programme, e.g. as in narrative documentaries, the common approach is to centre subtitles without symbols.

Other situations where the source of speech is not immediately apparent include telephone voices, radios, tannoy announcements, etc. It is helpful to accompany the first subtitle from these sources with a labelled (See 2.9 Other Techniques). caption:

```
LOUDSPEAKER:
"Fasten   your   seat-
belts, please."
```

Character-name labels are sometimes necessary for clarification, e.g. for crowd scenes or scenes enacted in the dark.

```
JOHN:  What's  happened
to the lights?
```

6.   Dialogue Techniques

All obvious speech should be accompanied by subtitle information, but under conditions of rapid dialogue, several short subtitles displayed in rapid sequence can result in staccato or 'machine-gun' effect.

There are two possible solutions for this:

i) Use of Double text when more than two characters speak simultaneously and contradict one another for example:

Do you want to go now?

Yes.   *No*

Both person's speech is contained within one subtitle where the appearance of each subtitle should form the beginning of the corresponding speech segment.

ii) Use of add-ons or cumulative titles

This is most effective when the two subtitles fit naturally together, for example in a question and answer sequence, or providing the punch line of a joke. Here the second part of the title is added on to the first part at the onset of the second utterance.

A further advantage of add-ons is that they appear more natural when the two corresponding speakers are not shown in the same camera shot. Add-ons should be used with care as they can cause the first part of the cumulative title to be re-read, resulting in a frustrating 'false alarm'.

Add-on techniques

In both double-text and add-ons, the second part should normally appear on the line immediately beneath the first part. If the second speaker is positioned to the screen right of the first speaker, then the second part of the double-text is displaced towards the right:

first speaker	
	second speaker
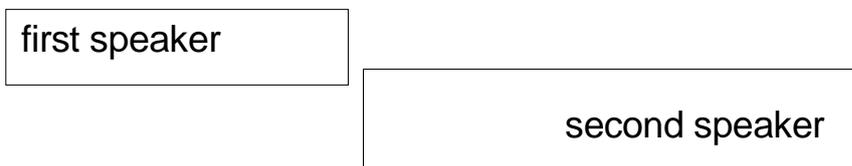
A general guide to the use of double-text and add-ons may be stated as follows:

i)   Double-text can be used when two characters or more speak simultaneously.

ii)   Add-ons should normally be preferred when two or more characters speak consecutively and time does not allow individual subtitles.

iii)   The total length of either double-text or add-on sequence should never exceed four lines.

7.   Other Techniques

i) Single quotes '...' can indicate non-synchronous speech, e.g. a voice-over or thoughts or nothing on screen visibly connected with speech.

ii) Unmarked text in upper and lower case indicates synchronous speech, i.e. the speaker is visible (most of the time) and titles follow.

iii) Double quotes "..." can suggest mechanically reproduced speech, e.g. radio, loudspeakers etc. or a quotation from a person or book.

iv) Text in brackets can indicate whispered speech or asides.

> *(SLURRED) He wasn't there.*

v) Brackets can also be used to indicate the way in which a person speaks:

vi) The source of speech can be labelled by using capital letters followed by a colon:

```
LOUDSPEAKER:
   "Fasten your seat-
belts, please."
```

```
JOHN: What's happened to the
            lights?
```

vii) Uncommon abbreviations, such as SFX, should be avoided.

8.   Sound Effects

Any relevant sound effect not immediately obvious from the visual action should be subtitled. This includes sound effects that become apparent in the subsequent action, e.g. the telephone ringing before it is picked up, an explosion occurring outside before everyone dives under the table.

Descriptive statements are normally preferable to onomatopoeic spellings for sound effects. But context and genre (cartoons versus drama, for example) must be taken into consideration.

GUNSHOT   is usually preferable to BANG!!!

Sound effect subtitles can also be used judiciously to create the background atmosphere for a scene:

ROAR FROM AUDIENCE

LIVELY CHATTER

The use of background colour (e.g. white text on a red background) and upper-case text, provide a distinction between sound effect subtitles and speech subtitles.

9. Music

At the very minimum, the title of the music playing should be given. Where possible the words of a song should be included. This is especially important where the programme is to be viewed by younger people. Pop programmes, opera and songs connected to the story line are particularly important areas.

Song lyrics should be subtitled verbatim; but, if the pace of the song is very rapid, whole couplets or verses may be omitted.

The lyrics of a song should be made obvious by means of a sign. The 'hash' or' sharp' sign is most commonly used. Where speech and song are interspersed, care should be taken to signpost each title correctly.

Provision of an occasional subtitle for mood music, if it is significant to the plot, can be very effective:

IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Such subtitles should be used only sparingly.

Occasionally, consecutive scenes are enacted in pitch darkness, and scene changes are signalled entirely by changes of incidental music. In such cases, if time permits, the subtitler should use subtitles such as:

LIVELY DANCE BAND MUSIC

Then, when the tempo of music changes dramatically, it is followed by:

MOVES INTO SLOW DANCE MUSIC

Thereby deaf viewers are made aware of the scene change.

10. Silence

Long speechless pauses in programmes can sometimes lead the viewer to wonder whether the teletext system has broken down. It can help in such cases to insert an explanatory caption such as:

INTRODUCTORY MUSIC

LONG PAUSE

ROMANTIC MUSIC

11.　Failure of Subtitles

Losing subtitles is as frustrating for the hearing-impaired viewer as losing sound is for the hearing viewer.

If subtitle insertion fails, it is important that there is a prompt transmission of an appropriately worded apology caption and, if restoration of transmission is delayed, an early explanation is to be given.

12.　Acquired Programmes

When broadcasters are converting acquired subtitling to meet the minimum standards set out in the guidelines, it is accepted that complete synchronisation or the presentation rate standards may not be possible.

13. Subtitling for the intended audience including children

The typical pace and complexity of subtitling can exclude a minority of less able readers within the deaf community. For many pre-lingually deaf children, a subtitle presentation rate of 70-80 words per minute is appropriate.

Three main editing devices should be remembered:

i)   Reduce the amount of text by reducing the reading speed and removing unnecessary words and sentences.
ii)   Represent the whole meaning.
iii)   Increase the use of three-line subtitles and reduce the number of add-ons.

Subtitles should accurately reflect the spoken word and as such should not be censored.

13.1   Children's Subtitles

While many deaf children over 11 years benefit from standard subtitling, those under the age of 11 years need simpler subtitles. The following guidelines are recommended for the subtitling of programmes targeted at children below the age of 11 years.

i)   There should be a match between the voice and subtitles as far as possible.

ii)   A strategy should be developed where words are omitted rather than changed to reduce the length of sentences.

14. Real-time subtitling

The production and transmission of subtitles in real time can present considerable problems for both the subtitler and the viewer. Current subtitling techniques, particularly for live broadcasts, do not provide the same high-quality service expected from pre-prepared scripts. Such techniques should be limited to occasions when there is insufficient time to prepare subtitles using other methods.

The construction of subtitles for informative subjects such as news should convey the whole meaning of the material.

14.1   Guidelines for Real-time Subtitling

In all cases efforts must be made to adhere to the following:

i.   Subtitles should contain a reasonable percentage of the words spoken.

ii.   Key facts should appear as a good percentage of the spoken message

iii.   Avoid key facts which are unnecessary or different from the original.

iv.   Where possible, avoid non-linguistic line breaks (splitting verbs etc.).

v.   Attempt to avoid overrunning shot changes (synchronisation).

vi.   Avoid subtitling over existing video captions (in news, this is often unavoidable, in which case a speaker's name can be included in the subtitle if available).

vii.   Send an apology caption following any serious mistake or a garbled subtitle; and, if possible, repeat the subtitle with the error corrected.

When cueing prepared texts for scripted parts of the programme:

i)   Try to cue the texts so that they closely match the spoken words in terms of start time.

ii)   Try to include speakers' names if available where in-vision captions have been obliterated.

iii)   Do not cue texts out rapidly to catch up if you get left behind - skip some and continue from the correct place.

15.   Digital Services

The advent of digital television offers the possibility of visual and technical enhancement of subtitles. One such way is the introduction of a clearer and more legible font and the use of symbols. The purpose of these changes is to increase the user's enjoyment of television. They should not be introduced in a way which detracts from the prime purpose of the subtitling service, which is to facilitate the understanding of programmes by deaf and hard of hearing people.

The guidelines set standards on converting existing subtitle files authored in analogue for use on Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and other digital services such as satellite and MMD. It is not intended that these guidelines should inhibit future enhancements, but rather to control progress so that changes that deviate radically from current practice should be made only after careful consideration and consultation.

i) Any Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) shall use the Tiresias font for all subtitles.

ii) Other digital services should be encouraged to use this format or as close it as may be possible.

iii) The nominal size of subtitles shall be 24 television lines for the capital 'V'.

iv) For reasons of latency, use of intensive four-line subtitles, to include those within "add-ons", shall be avoided. (Latency means the presentation of subtitles to the screen. Intensive subtitles mean those where the subtitle rows contain a considerable amount of text).

v) Subtitles converted from existing EBU 3264 files (or similar) or from pre-recorded live 335 tapes shall as closely as possible retain the positioning and line breaks of the original.

vi) The range of colours shall be limited to 12 that shall closely replicate the range associated with analogue teletext delivery.

vii) The present practice of using '#' to indicate music may be changed to use of two semi-quavers as part of the Tiresias set.

16. OTHER MATTERS

16.1 National Emergencies

Deaf and hard-of-hearing people need to be kept informed about national and local emergencies.

When information about emergencies is being broadcast, the same information, including relevant telephone numbers, should be provided, preferably in open captions leaving sufficient time to write the details down.

16.2 Apology Captions

Where practicable an appropriate apology or explanation is to be transmitted as soon as possible after any loss of subtitles.

Broadcasters, that are required to provide subtitles, must ensure that conventional subtitles (transmitted on a dedicated line within the VBI and are normally accessed via Page 888 on the remote control), are provided on all analogue terrestrial and digital satellite transmission services. Such broadcasters should, as far as possible, ensure that subtitles can be carried through on re-transmission systems including, but not limited to, cable and MMD systems.

Broadcasters are encouraged to develop experience in the provision and transmission of digital subtitles.

Where subtitles are provided simultaneously in both conventional and digital modes, the conventional subtitling capacity only will be taken into account in determining the subtitling targets.

(ii)   Irish Sign Language

Introduction

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has set out the rules required under Section 43(1)(c), to which it has given the title **Access Rules**. A copy of the Access Rules is available on www.bai.ie or by request from the Authority.

This is the **BAI Guidelines - Irish Sign Language** document. In this document the BAI outlines the general and technical standards required in relation to Irish Sign Language provision. These guidelines are intended to support the implementation of the BAI Access Rules regarding Sign Language. The BAI acknowledges the assistance of the 'Guidance On Standards for Sign Language' document produced by Ofcom, in the preparation of this document. The guidelines may be changed from time to time, as deemed appropriate.

Irish Sign Language

Irish Sign Language is the indigenous language of the deaf community in Ireland. It is a visual, spatial language with its own syntax and complex grammatical structure. Each sign language is particular to the country of origin. The targets outlined in the Access Rules refer to Irish Sign Language provision.

1.   Format

There are two ways of providing sign language access to programmes:

(i)   **Interpretation.** A person interprets and signs live or recorded programmes or programme segments. The image of such an interpreter is usually superimposed on a programme. This is referred to later in this document as an overlay insert.

(ii)   **Presentation.** A sign language presenter, narrator or reporter provides the main language in the programme or programme segment. The signs are then interpreted into a 'voice over', with the addition of subtitles or captions as appropriate.

Both presentation and interpretation are valid methods of meeting the requirements of the Access Rules.

2.   General Requirements

2.1   The form of sign language provision

Under the current technical arrangement of the analogue transmission system signed programmes can only be broadcast in an open format.

2.2   Signing competence

Broadcasters should ensure that sign language interpreters have a level of competence and fluency in Irish Sign Language.

2.3 Off-screen sounds

The sign language interpreter or presenter should indicate the presence of off-screen sounds (e.g. a ringing telephone, the knocking of a door or a gunshot) where these are important to the understanding of the programme.

2.4 Synchronising

Sign language interpretation should start at the same time as speech. This may not always be practical during the interpretation of live programmes.

The use of autocues has been found to be a useful aid to deaf interpreters and can help towards synchronism.

The timing of signed sentences should be as close to speech as possible. Equally with sign language presentation, a "voice over" sentence should also be as close to the sign language as possible.

It should be noted, however, that Irish Sign Language and the English language have a different grammatical structure so that the two cannot match each other directly. Every effort, where practicable, should be made to provide equivalent information to all viewers.

2.5 Monitoring

Broadcasters should monitor the effectiveness of the service through contact with deaf people and their representatives.

2.6   Apology for loss of service

Where practical, a visual caption or subtitle should be displayed when there is a breakdown in the service.

3.   Guidelines specific to Irish Sign Language interpretation

3.1   Quality of display

The presentation of the signer on the display screen should be of sufficient size and resolution to show all movements of the full upper trunk together with arms, hands and fingers, shoulder, neck and all relevant facial movements and expressions.

All important gestures that convey meaning through sign language must be easily and accurately recognised.

3.2   Size and shape of overlaid inserts

The size of the overlay must ensure that the body and facial expressions referred to above are easily discernible from normal viewing distances. Where practicable a signer's image, when at rest, that is notionally framed to occupy at least one sixth of the picture area would normally be sufficient to ensure this condition is met.

For programmes primarily aimed at deaf people and in the "open" format a useful technique, can be to reduce the visual image by, for example, 25 per cent and use the subsequent blank area to place the interpreter.

3.3　Choice of dress and background colours

It is important that the person signing can be clearly distinguished, for example by means of contrasting plain colours and suitable lighting. The visual appearance of the interpreter (e.g. choice of clothing and dress accessories) should not cause undue distraction to the viewer.

3.4　Speaker identification

This can be achieved by the signer using such techniques as referencing to a person by shifts in the eye gaze and body positioning or giving the speaker's name and reflecting his or her manner. (This technique is known as characterisation).

(iii)   Audio Description

Introduction

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has set out the rules required under Section 43(1)(c), to which it has given the title *Access Rules*. A copy of the Access Rules is available on www.bai.ie or by request from the Authority.

This is the **BAI Guidelines – Audio Description** document. In this document the BAI outlines the general and technical standards required in relation to Audio Description provision. These guidelines are intended to support the implementation of the BAI Access Rules regarding Audio Description. The guidelines may be changed from time to time, as deemed appropriate. The BAI acknowledges the work conducted by the former AUDETEL consortium and the assistance of Ofcom's Guidance on Standards for Audio Description document in the preparation of this document.

Audio Description

Audio Description is a commentary that gives a viewer with a visual impairment a verbal description of what is happening on the screen at any given moment, as an aid to the understanding and enjoyment of the programme.

1.   What to describe

The following is a summary of the elements of a programme which should be described.

i)   Characters

The character's dress, physical attributes, facial expressions, body language, ethnic background (if relevant to the storyline) and age should be audio described.

ii)   Locations

The location including scene changes, whenever possible should be described.

iii)   Time of day

The time of day, where appropriate, should be described.

iv)   On-screen action

The action on the screen should be described.

v)   Sounds or sound effects

Sounds or sound effects which are not readily identifiable should be described.

vi)   Subtitled captions

Any on-screen signs or writing which are relevant should be described.

vii) Opening Titles and/or End Credits

Opening titles and end credits should be described.

2. When to describe

It is important that the audio description does not encroach on the dialogue.

Audio description should occur when there are breaks in dialogue. It can only encroach upon dialogue which is inconsequential or is being subtitled or captioned and only then to impart relevant information or to read the subtitle or caption. If necessary it can occur over song lyrics.

Audio description should not occur over mainstream dialogue. It should not occur over sound effects, where they complement the film or the description or over critical background music.

3. What not to describe

The describers personal opinion in relation to the on-screen action should not be described. For example, something unseen such as the motivation or reasoning for the action on screen should not be described.

If there are mistakes in editing or continuity, these should not be replicated in the audio description.

4. Programme Sound Level

When a descriptive commentary is inserted into a programme, the background level of programme audio needs to be reduced, so that the description can be clearly heard. Care should be taken to ensure the narration sound level does not exceed that of the background.

Generally the narration should be fixed at a constant level. The narrative voice is fixed at a constant level at the start of the recording while the degree of fading of the main sound level at the appropriate junctures can be predetermined by the work station.

5. Audio Description Recording

Unlike sighted viewers, who have the benefit of both visual and aural information, visually impaired viewers rely on the clarity of every word. The description therefore must not be hurried; every word should be clear, audible and timed carefully so that it does not sit uncomfortably close to incoming dialogue.

Whilst the voice should be neutral, it may be important to add emotion at different points in different films to suit the mood and the plot development. In comedy, the narration should be steady but delivered with a slight smile. The description should not, however, become a performance in its own right.

The use of 'filmic' expressions such as 'the camera pans left' etc. should be avoided. A description should not censor what is on the screen.

6. Grammar and Language

i)   Present tense should be used with 'present continuous' for on-going   activities.

ii)   As much as possible, complete sentences should be used.

iii)   It is important that proper names are used. Visually impaired viewers need to be clear with regard to which character the description refers. The use of 'she'/ 'he' can be confusing for the audience. Any potential for ambiguity when there are several people on screen at once should be clarified with reference to proper nouns.

iv)   Descriptive adjectives are important but must not reflect the personal view of the describer.

v)   'We see…' 'In front of us…' should generally be avoided.

7.   Prioritising information

Setting the scene is an essential part of audio description and without guidance the visually impaired viewer can lose the thread of a story or narrative.

When several people are speaking at the same time, it is important to clarify who is speaking at any given moment. Frequently repeating proper names is helpful so the viewers are left in no doubt as to who is doing or saying what.

Avoid colourful imagery or elegant turns of phrase except where such language complements the style of programme.

Avoid giving too much detail. Minor description details, unless they are the subject of the programme need not be mentioned.

Avoid providing too much description which can dilute the mood of a scene or be exhausting or even irritating.

Personal opinion should not be given or events interpreted, but it is equally important that visually impaired viewers are given key visual clues which may otherwise be missed.

Description should avoid stating the obvious, for example a telephone or doorbell ringing does not need to be described, unless the actual sounds are unfamiliar.

8.   Soap operas

Most soap opera does not allow for lengthy descriptions, as dialogues follows rapidly and there are very few purely visual sequences. Visually impaired viewers, who regularly view soap operas, soon become familiar with the character's voices. When a new character is introduced it is helpful to speed up the familiarisation by describing the physical aspects but no need to provide extra biographical information as that can be achieved over the subsequent weeks.

9.   Current affairs documentaries

Current affairs programmes offer less scope for description because they tend to be wordy, but each programme should be assessed individually. Subtitles or captions within such programmes should be described.

10.   Sporting and Live Events

Combining the description of live programmes with an existing commentary is difficult but can be achieved for some programmes.

Broadcasters can be encouraged to consider the requirements of visually impaired people without the need for audio description (by reducing reliance on on-screen text and tabular data.

11.   Children's programming

The BAI has determined that special emphasis should be placed on access services for children. When a description is being written specifically for children's programmes, the vocabulary and sentence construction should be suited to the age group for which the programme in intended. The tone of the narration should also reflect the tone of the programme.

12.   Apology for breakdown of service

Where practicable an appropriate verbal apology or explanation is to be transmitted as soon as possible after the loss or breakdown in the audio description service.

Appendix 3

Legislative Provisions

Section 43(1)(c) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that: -

"The Authority shall, subject to the requirements of section 41(2) and, in accordance with subsection (4), prepare, and from time to time as occasion requires, revise rules ("broadcasting rules") with respect to:-

(c) The specific steps each broadcaster is required to take to promote the understanding and enjoyment by:-

      i) persons who are deaf or have a hearing impairment,

      ii) persons who are blind or partially sighted, and,

      iii) persons who have a hearing impairment and are partially sighted,

of programmes transmitted on any broadcasting service provided by the broadcaster."

Section 43(2) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that: -

"Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1)(c), broadcasting rules with respect to that paragraph shall require each broadcaster of audio-visual material to take specified steps to provide access to that material by persons who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, persons who are blind or partially sighted, and persons who have a hearing impairment and are partially sighted by means of specified services such as -.

(a)   sign language.

(b)   teletext services.

(c)   subtitling, and audio description, and

(d)   Have regard to whether the foregoing material is being provided –

(i)   Daily or at other regular intervals,

(ii)   At popular viewing times as well as at other times, and

(iii)   For news and news-related matters as well as for other matters."

Section 43(3) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that: -

"Rules under subsection (1)(c) may, in respect of any period specified in them beginning on or after the passing of this Act, require a broadcaster to ensure that a specified percentage of programmes transmitted on a broadcasting service provided by him or her in that period employs specified means by which the understanding and enjoyment by persons referred in subparagraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) of that paragraph of that percentage of programmes may be promoted."

Section 43(6) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that: -

"The Authority shall every two years, or such lesser period as it may decide, review a broadcasting rule made under subsection (1)(c)."

Section 8 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 provides that:-

Broadcasters (within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 2009) in fulfilling their obligations in relation to Irish Sign Language targets and requirements in respect of programmes transmitted on a broadcasting service (within the meaning of that Act) provided by the broadcaster as set out in the broadcasting rules made under section 43(1) (c) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland shall adhere to principles of equality, dignity and respect in terms of the promotion and broadcasting of such programmes.