

Ontario-Released Movies, Ratings, and On-Screen Tobacco, June 2010-May 2011

Summary: A comparison of the Ontario Film Review Board (OFRB) and Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) movie ratings of top-grossing films released in Ontario, Canada, June 2010-May 2011 was analyzed along with the movies' tobacco content and estimated in-theater tobacco impressions.

Results show that movies in Ontario were more often youth rated than in the USA. Research suggests that movie rating systems allowing youth access to films rated "R" in the USA expose young people to substantially more on-screen tobacco impressions.¹ This exposure's effect on youth smoking initiation is dose-related. The more youth see smoking in movies the more likely they are to start.² Therefore, the estimate number of new youth tobacco users attributable to on-screen smoking is likely higher in Ontario than the 44 percent estimated for the USA.¹

Ontario youth exposure to on-screen smoking can be significantly reduced with an 18A rating for new movies with tobacco content³. Neither the OFRB nor the MPAA currently include tobacco as a factor in assigning movie ratings.⁴ The history of tobacco industry collaboration with Hollywood including payment for placement of tobacco products in movies is well documented.⁵ In Ontario, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death, killing 13,000 Ontarians every year.⁶

In Ontario, more movies that contain tobacco were youth-rated (Table 4)

- Of the 56 movies with tobacco content, 88% (49/56) were youth-rated by the OFRB (G/PG/14A); 57% (32/56) were youth-rated by the MPAA (G/PG/PG-13).

In Ontario, more in-theatre tobacco impressions are delivered by youth-rated movies (Table 5)

- 81% (394 million/489 million) of tobacco impressions were delivered in movies youth-rated by the OFRB to Ontario theatre audiences. In the USA, 53% (6 billion/11.4 billion) of tobacco impressions were delivered by movies youth-rated by the MPAA.

In Ontario, more top-grossing movies are youth rated (Table 2)

- 92% (123/134) of top-grossing movies in Ontario were youth-rated by the OFRB. In the USA, 73% (98/134) of the same movies were youth-rated by the MPAA.
- 60% (80/134) of all top-grossing movies received a lower youth rating in Ontario than in the USA (e.g., PG instead of PG-13 or 14A instead of R see Figure 1) making these movies more accessible to youth.
 - 31% (25/80) were adult-rated (R) by the MPAA (e.g. OFRB rated *Black Swan* 14A, *The King's Speech* PG which were R rated by the MPAA).
 - The OFRB never assigned an adult-rating (18A) a movie that the MPAA had rated for youth.

In Ontario, more than 40% of top-grossing movies include tobacco (Table 3)

- 42% (56/134) of all the top-grossing movies included tobacco content.⁷
- The OFRB noted "Tobacco use" or "Illustrated or verbal references to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco" in the "Detailed Observations" posted on its website for 88% (49/56) of the movies with tobacco.⁸
 - The OFRB does not require this tobacco warning to be provided beyond the OFRB website.
 - The OFRB "Detailed Observations" did not capture all tobacco. For example, a package of cigarettes and ashtray visible in the movie *Salt* was not mention by the OFRB. See Table 6 for examples.
 - The OFRB current practice of noting tobacco content demonstrates an ability to include tobacco when assigning film ratings to ensure that future youth-rated films are tobacco-free.

Methodology: The sample included 134 top-grossing movies in the “domestic” (USA and Canada) market, from June 2010 - May 2011 (Table 1). Top-grossing movies ranked among the top 10 in box office gross earnings in any week of their first-run theatrical release. Ontario and USA movie ratings were established from the OFRB and MPAA, respectively (Figure 1). Tobacco content of each movie was evaluated by Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down!, a project of Breathe California Sacramento-Emigrant Trails (USA). Tobacco impressions (paid admissions X tobacco incidents, per film) in the ‘domestic’ film market were calculated by the University of California, San Francisco, Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education and assigned to Ontario and the USA on a population basis.

Table 1: Movie Sample	Total
Top Grossing movies in Ontario ⁹	134

Table 2: Movie Ratings	Total	%
# of movies youth-rated in Ontario by OFRB	123/134	92%
# of movies youth-rated in USA by MPAA	98/134	73%
# of movies that received a lower rating by OFRB than MPAA ¹⁰	80/134	60%
# of movies that received a lower rating by MPAA than OFRB	0/134	0%
# of movies where rating reduced from an adult rating (‘R’) in USA to youth rating (PG, 14A) in Ontario	25/80	31%
# of movies that OFRB assigned an 18A rating	11/134	8%
# of movies that MPAA assigned an ‘R’ rating	36/134	27%
# of movies that OFRB assigned an 18A rating and the MPAA assigned an ‘R’ rating	11/36	31%

Table 3: Tobacco Ratings	Total	%
# of movies with tobacco content ¹¹	56/134	42%
# of movies with tobacco content where OFRB noted “Tobacco Use” and/or ‘Illustrated or verbal references to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco’ ¹²	49/56	88%
# of movies with tobacco content where OFRB did not identify tobacco depiction yet TUTD did.	7/56	13%

Table 4: Youth Exposure in Ontario	Total	%
# of movies with tobacco content assigned a youth rating by the OFRB ⁸	49/56	88%
# of movies with tobacco content assigned a youth rating by the MPAA ¹³	32/56	57%
# youth-rated movies rated by OFRB with tobacco content ⁹	49/123	40%
# youth-rated movies rated by MPAA with tobacco content ⁹	32/98	33%

Table 5: In-Theatre Tobacco Impressions Delivered by OFRB & MPAA-Rated Movies, June 2010-May 2011				
	Youth-Rated	Percent	Adult-Rated	Percent
OFRB (Ontario share of all “domestic” tobacco impressions)	394,801,823	80.7%	94,220,408	19.3%
MPAA (USA share of all “domestic” tobacco impressions)	6,081,192,506	53.0%	5,388,085,991	47.0%

Table 6: Top-Grossing Movies, Domestic (Canada & US) release, June 2010-May 2011						
MOVIE TITLE ¹⁴	Lower OFRB rating	OFRB RATING ⁸	MPAA RATING ¹³	OFRB DETAIL 1 ¹⁵	OFRB DETAIL 2 ¹⁶	TUTD Tobacco Status ¹⁷
1. American, The	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
2. Town, The	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
3. Let Me In	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
4. My Soul to Take	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
5. Conviction	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
6. Due Date	Yes	14A	R		Y	Yes










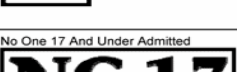
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7. For Colored Girls	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
8. Love and Other Drugs	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
9. Faster	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
10. Black Swan	Yes	14A	R	Y		Yes
11. Fighter, The	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
12. No Strings Attached	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
13. Sanctum	Yes	14A	R	No observation by OFRB		Yes
14. Lincoln Lawyer, The	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
15. Paul	Yes	14A	R	Y	Y	Yes
16. Bridesmaids	Yes	14A	R		Y	Yes
17. Get Him to the Greek	Yes	14A	R		Y	
18. Cyrus	Yes	14A	R			
19. Predators	Yes	14A	R		Y	
20. Going the Distance	Yes	14A	R			
21. Case 39	Yes	14A	R			
22. Paranormal Activity 2	Yes	14A	R			
23. Hall Pass	Yes	14A	R		Y	
24. Scream 4	Yes	14A	R			
25. King's Speech, The	Yes	PG	R	Y		Yes
26. A Team, The	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
27. Salt	Yes	PG	PG-13	No observation by OFRB		Yes
28. Eat Pray Love	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
29. Switch, The	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	Yes
30. Avatar: Special Edition	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
31. Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
32. Hereafter	Yes	PG	PG-13	No observation by OFRB		Yes
33. Morning Glory	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
34. Fair Game	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
35. Burlesque	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
36. Tourist, The	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
37. Country Strong	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
38. Green Hornet, The	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
39. I Am Number Four	Yes	PG	PG-13	No observation by OFRB		Yes
40. Hanna	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
41. Madea's Big Happy Family	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	Yes
42. Water for Elephants	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes
43. Jumping the Broom	Yes	PG	PG-13	Y		Yes

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44. Killers	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
45. Knight and Day	Yes	PG	PG-13			
46. Grown Ups	Yes	PG	PG-13			
47. Twilight Saga: Eclipse, The	Yes	PG	PG-13			
48. Inception	Yes	PG	PG-13			
49. Charlie St. Cloud	Yes	PG	PG-13			
50. Step Up 3D	Yes	PG	PG-13			
51. Scott Pilgrim vs. The World	Yes	PG	PG-13			
52. Lottery Ticket	Yes	PG	PG-13			
53. Life As We Know It	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
54. Red	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
55. Unstoppable	Yes	PG	PG-13			
56. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1	Yes	PG	PG-13			
57. How Do You Know	Yes	PG	PG-13			
58. Little Fockers	Yes	PG	PG-13			
59. Dilemma, The	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
60. Roommate, The	Yes	PG	PG-13			
61. Eagle, The	Yes	PG	PG-13			
62. Just Go With It	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
63. Big Mommas: Like Father Like Son	Yes	PG	PG-13			
64. Adjustment Bureau, The	Yes	PG	PG-13			
65. Beastly	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
66. Red Riding Hood	Yes	PG	PG-13			
67. Source Code	Yes	PG	PG-13			
68. Arthur	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
69. Fast Five	Yes	PG	PG-13			
70. Something Borrowed	Yes	PG	PG-13		Y	
71. Thor	Yes	PG	PG-13			
72. Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides	Yes	PG	PG-13			
73. Marmaduke	Yes	G	PG			
74. Cats and Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore	Yes	G	PG			
75. Nanny McPhee Returns	Yes	G	PG			
76. Secretariat	Yes	G	PG			
77. Yogi Bear	Yes	G	PG			
78. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules	Yes	G	PG			
79. Hop	Yes	G	PG			
80. Hoodwinked Too! Hood VS. Evil	Yes	G	PG			

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81. Expendables, The		18A	R	Y	Y	Yes
82. Machete		18A	R	Y	Y	Yes
83. Jackass 3D		18A	R	No observation by OFRB		Yes
84. Mechanic, The		18A	R	Y	Y	Yes
85. Drive Angry 3D		18A	R	Y		Yes
86. Your Highness		18A	R		Y	Yes
87. Hangover Part II, The		18A	R	Y	Y	Yes
88. Splice		18A	R			
89. Piranha 3D		18A	R			
90. Resident Evil: Afterlife		18A	R			
91. Saw 3D		18A	R			
92. Dinner for Schmucks		14A	PG-13		Y	Yes
93. Other Guys, The		14A	PG-13		Y	Yes
94. Takers		14A	PG-13	Y		Yes
95. The Social Network		14A	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
96. Skyline		14A	PG-13	Y		Yes
97. Next Three Days, The		14A	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
98. True Grit		14A	PG-13	Y		Yes
99. Rite, The		14A	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
100. Unknown		14A	PG-13	Y	Y	Yes
101. Limitless		14A	PG-13	Y		Yes
102. Sucker Punch		14A	PG-13	Y		Yes
103. Priest		14A	PG-13	No observation by OFRB		Yes
104. Battle: Los Angeles		14A	PG-13			
105. Jonah Hex		14A	PG-13			
106. Vampires Suck		14A	PG-13		Y	
107. Last Exorcism, The		14A	PG-13			
108. Devil		14A	PG-13			
109. Easy A		14A	PG-13		Y	
110. Season of the Witch		14A	PG-13			
111. Insidious		14A	PG-13			
112. Rango		PG	PG	Y		Yes
113. Karate Kid, The		PG	PG			
114. Last Airbender, The		PG	PG			
115. Despicable Me		PG	PG			
116. Sorcerer's Apprentice, The		PG	PG			
117. Alpha and Omega		PG	PG			
118. You Again		PG	PG			

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119. Legend of Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole		PG	PG			
120. Megamind		PG	PG			
121. Tangled		PG	PG			
122. Chronicles of Narnia, The: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader		PG	PG			
123. Tron: Legacy		PG	PG			
124. Gulliver's Travels		PG	PG			
125. Mars Needs Moms		PG	PG			
126. Soul Surfer		PG	PG			
127. Prom		PG	PG			
128. Kung Fu Panda 2		PG	PG			
129. Justin Beiber: Never Say Never		G	G	No observation by OFRB		Yes
130. Toy Story 3		G	G			
131. Ramona and Beezus		G	G			
132. Gnomeo & Juliet		G	G			
133. Rio		G	G			
134. African Cats		G	G			

FIGURE 1: OFRB & MPAA RATING SYSTEMS

Ontario Film Review Board rating system		Motion Picture Association of America rating system	
 Suitable for all	Suitable for viewers of all ages.	 General Audiences	Nothing that would offend parents for viewing by children.
 Parental guidance advised	Parental guidance is advised. Theme of content may not be suitable for all children.	 Parental Guidance Suggested	Parents urged to give "parental guidance." May contain some material parents might not like for their young children.
 Persons younger than 14 must be accompanied by an adult	Suitable for viewing by persons 14 years of age and older. Persons under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. May contain: violence, coarse language and/or sexually suggestive scenes.	 Parents Strongly Cautioned	Parents are urged to be cautious. Some material may be inappropriate for pre-teenagers.
 Persons younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult	Suitable for viewing by persons 18 years of age and older. Persons under 18 may attend but must be accompanied by an adult. May contain: explicit violence, frequent coarse language, sexual activity and/or horror.	 Restricted	Contains some adult material. Parents are urged to learn about the film before taking their young children with them.
 Restricted to persons 18 or older	Admittance restricted to persons 18 years of age and over. Content not suitable for minors. May contain: frequent use of sexual activity, brutal/graphic violence, intense horror and/or other disturbing content.	 No One 17 And Under Admitted	Patently adult. Children are not admitted.

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References:

- ¹ Anderson SJ, Millett C, Polansky JR, Glantz S (2010). Exposure to smoking in movies among British adolescents 2001-2006. *Tobacco Control* doi: 10.1136/tc.2009.034991. Available at tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2010/02/27/tc.2009.034991.full
- ² National Cancer Institute, monograph 19: The role of the media in promoting and reducing tobacco use, June 2008.
- ³ With the possible exception of portrayals of actual historical persons who actually smoked, as in biography-based dramas or documentaries, or unambiguous depictions of the dire health consequences of smoking and secondhand smoke.
- ⁴ Polansky JR, Mitchell S, Glantz SA (2010) [*Film-Flam: How MPAA/NATO movie labels hide the biggest media risk to kids*](#). UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research & Education
- ⁵ Smoke-Free Movies website <http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/bigtobacco.html>. Accessed June 17, 2011.
- ⁶ Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport <http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/smoke-free/legislation/default.asp> Accessed June 17, 2011.
- ⁷ Scene Smoking www.scenesmoking.org home of the Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Project tracks tobacco content in top-grossing new release movies. The Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Project recruits and trains young people between the ages of 14-22 to utilize a standardized form for analyzing tobacco content in movies. Reviewers are then assigned specific movies for analysis. The amount and type of tobacco use depicted, the demographics of who is using tobacco and any perceived messages about tobacco use are included in each review. All movies are reviewed by a team of 2-3 youth and adults.
- ⁸ OFRB <http://www.ofrb.gov.on.ca>
- ⁹ These movies were released in Ontario and are top-grossing movies in the domestic (USA and Canada) market. See Table 6 for complete list of movies sampled.
- ¹⁰ Examples of rating reductions: *Marmaduke* PG (US) ↓ G(ON); *Killers* PG-13(US) ↓ PG(ON); *Get Him to the Greek* 'R'(US) ↓ 14A (ON).
- ¹¹ According to www.scenesmoking.org review of tobacco content.
- ¹² www.ofrb.gov.on.ca comparison to movies identified by www.scenesmoking.com as having tobacco content.
- ¹³ MPAA www.filmratings.com
- ¹⁴ Animated films in italics. Movie with tobacco content in bold.
- ¹⁵ OFRB Detail Observation: 'Tobacco Use'
- ¹⁶ OFRB Detail Observation: 'Illustrated or verbal references to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco'
- ¹⁷ Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! published tobacco content. Precise counts are used to calculate tobacco impressions.