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## Industry tracks liquor ad complaints

Objections about sexual imagery and more; trade group says it's proof of self-policing.

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**NEW YORK (Reuters) - The spirits industry received 17 complaints in the United States in the first six months of 2005 about advertising that may have violated its self-imposed marketing guidelines, a trade group said Thursday.**

The complaints to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States concerned the location of billboards, the publication of ads in magazines not geared toward adults, and the use of sexual imagery in ads.

Other industry groups are starting to copy the council's approach of self-policing advertising practices. For instance, drug makers said Tuesday they will set up an office to review complaints about the marketing of prescription drugs in a bid to quiet criticism of commercials and magazine ads.

The Distilled Spirits Council began publishing its review of questionable advertising in March to show lawmakers and consumers that self-regulation works. The first report covered 15 complaints that were made about spirits advertising during 2004.

According to the council, most of the offending material covered in the latest report was either changed to conform to industry standards or discontinued. But two companies, Bang Distribution Co. Inc. and Spirits Marque One LLC, did not respond to the trade group's questions about their advertising.

Bang's print ad for its Bang vodka contains the image of a naked woman whose legs appear to be part of a

martini glass. Spirits Marque One LLC ad for Svedka vodka contains pictures of alcohol being poured between a woman's breasts.

The Distilled Spirits Council said the ads violate its code regarding advertising and marketing. Neither Spirits Marque or Bang are members of the Distilled Spirits Council.

Representatives at both Spirits Marque or Bang were not available to comment on why they did not respond to the council, which has set up an advisory board to review alcohol marketing practices.

Other companies that are not members of the Distilled Spirits Council, such as SKYY Spirits and Heaven Hill Distilleries, did change their advertising to comply with the standards.

In three cases, the council's advisory board found that advertisements that received complaints did not violate its code. Those cases included a magazine ad for Bacardi rum and diet cola and an Absolut vodka billboard in Los Angeles.

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