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SAFEGUARDING OUR BRAND ASSETS

Brand Compliance Audit Guide

YMCA OF THE USA

Updated 9/5/2017

WHY?

Our brand is our most valuable asset. It represents our name, our reputation, and is the essence of who we are. It is the personal and shared responsibility of all leaders of the Y Movement to uphold and protect our brand and our organization at all times. If we fail to do so, we risk both losing control of our name and symbols and suffering a diminished reputation. For this reason, the National Board has approved a set of brand requirements and guidelines.

Although brand encompasses far more than simply the name of the organization, the logo, and the way an organization represents itself visually, this guide focuses on the process for ensuring that these fundamental features on which the rest of our brand depends are protected, specifically through the brand compliance audit process.

For more information, including guides and resources to help you support the Y brand in its entirety, please visit www.theyYbrand.org.

CEOs and brand advocates are responsible for reviewing this document and ensuring their YMCA's ongoing compliance.

Should you have any questions regarding the information contained within this document, please contact ybrandcompliance@ymca.net.

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BRAND REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLIANCE

This document outlines the protocols which must be followed to maintain and prove brand compliant status as required of all associations by Article II, Section 2i of the National Constitution:

“The name Young Men’s Christian Association and all names, marks, logos, symbols and other intellectual property, including copyrights, owned, used or authorized by the National Council, are the property of the National Council, and member associations have a limited, revocable, non-exclusive, non-transferable right to use such intellectual property only as authorized by the National Board through its policies and guidelines to protect the YMCA brand and reputation.”

ALL Ys ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS AS A CONDITION OF MEMBERSHIP

- Adhere to the YMCA brand guidelines. Guidelines and all technical supplements can be found on the Brand Resource Center at www.theybrand.org
- Protect our trademarks by ensuring:
 - Proper use of the YMCA logo
 - Proper use of the areas of focus
 - Proper use of the YMCA name
 - When presenting your YMCA’s name to the public, whether on signage, on your association’s website, on letterhead, etc., you must include “YMCA” as part of the name. This includes the name of your Y’s association, the names of branches within your association, including branch camps and any other facilities or program centers wholly owned and operated by your YMCA. Please note that using only the letter Y, instead of the complete YMCA name, does not fulfill this requirement. The use of “Y” is for discussion of our Movement’s general presence or activity, or for informal reference to your Y in text once the full name has been used.
 - Y-USA reserves the right to review and approve or deny any joint ventures with a third party that include the use of the YMCA name and associated marks. A joint venture is a shared undertaking between a Y and another entity that is not under the sole control of the YMCA board of directors. Joint ventures involve shared risks and rewards and are often governed by a joint board. The parties may sometimes create a separate legal entity to operate the joint venture. If you have any questions regarding joint ventures or if you are considering entering into a joint venture, please contact ybrandcompliance@ymca.net for further clarification and guidance.

BRAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT SYSTEM

For a YMCA association to be considered compliant with Article II Section 2i of the National Constitution, it must adhere to the following processes:

BRAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT

All YMCAs will have a regular brand compliance audit at least once between the years 2016 – 2020 and thereafter as may be defined.

- Each YMCA's audit year will be randomly selected
- The CEO and the brand advocate of each Y will be notified of their Y's selection in the year preceding their audit year. Specific audit instructions and requirements will be provided at that time, but general information on the brand audit is always available on the Brand Resource Center at www.theybrand.org

SUPPLEMENTAL BRAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT

If a significant violation, including but not limited to a trademark violation, comes to Y-USA's attention outside of a regular brand compliance audit, the YMCA in violation will be subject to a supplemental brand compliance audit. The YMCA's CEO and brand advocate will be notified of the supplemental brand audit when it is initiated. To receive supplemental audit approval, the YMCA must correct the violation(s) within the timeline set by YMCA of the USA. The supplemental audit process is independent of the regular brand compliance audit process and can be initiated at any time, even if a Y's regular brand compliance audit had previously been approved.

TRADEMARK VIOLATIONS

Trademark protection ensures the proper use of our marks and symbols, as represented in the Y logo and areas of focus, and the proper use of our name. At any point, should a trademark violation be identified, the violation must be corrected through the supplemental audit process.

Trademark violations consist of the following:

1. Improper use of the YMCA logo
2. Improper use of the areas of focus
3. Misuse of the YMCA name, defined as:
 - Failure to include “YMCA” as part of your Y’s name when identifying the YMCA to the public as described on page 4 of this document
 - Misuse of “YMCA” when creating URLs, including failure to include the association name in URLs that include YMCA
 - Failure to include YMCA in association or branch name on sponsor or other 3rd party materials that include the YMCA logo
 - Failure to acquire Y-USA approval for use of the YMCA name in a joint venture as described on page 4 of this document

Evidence of the above trademark violations may be brought to Y-USA’s attention at any time, during or outside of a regular brand compliance audit. If a trademark violation has been identified, Y-USA will immediately contact the CEO and brand advocate of that Y to determine a timeline and plan of action to correct. A supplemental brand audit will then be initiated to manage the necessary correction.

CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE REGULAR BRAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT PROCESS

- If a YMCA selected for the regular brand compliance audit process fails to submit the required materials for review by the submission deadline, it is out of compliance with YMCA member qualifications and will be immediately referred to the Regional Committee on Membership Standards* (RCMS) for further action. Continued non-compliance may lead to conditional status as determined by the National Committee on Membership Standards.*
- If a YMCA selected for the regular brand audit process fails to correct and gain approval of items initially deemed non-compliant by the completion deadline, the YMCA in question will be immediately referred to the Regional Committee on Membership Standards for further action. Continued non-compliance may lead to conditional status as determined by the National Committee on Membership Standards.*

FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE REVISIONS THROUGH SUPPLEMENTAL BRAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT PROCESS

- If a YMCA fails to complete the required corrections via the supplemental audit process by the YMCA of the USA approved deadline, it will be immediately referred to the Regional Committee on Membership Standards* (RCMS) for further action. Continued non-compliance may lead to conditional status as determined by the National Committee on Membership Standards.*

Please note: It is the policy of Y-USA's Financial Development department to not re-grant funds to Ys who are still in the process of addressing membership standards issues.

*For more information on RCMS and NCMS please refer to the National Committee on Membership Standards Policies and Procedures Manual found on www.yexchange.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Y-USA created this resource to help Ys understand the requirements of our brand and the protection of our trademarks. Questions about this resource may be sent to ybrandcompliance@ymca.net.