

Federation of Victorian Film Societies Inc

INFORMATION SHEET 20 - (30th March 2026)



Your Image is Our Focus

DVD REGIONAL CODING AND HOW TO BEAT IT

If you are having trouble screening some DVDs your DVD player may not be set up for all regions.

The DVD distribution companies set up 6 geographic areas in an initial attempt to control the various aspects of a release (including content, date and price) on a region-by-region basis and most DVDs are produced with specific “region” identifiers in the signal, which limit them to being screened on equipment designed for other regions. In Australia, the ACCC has stated that the practice of limiting DVD players to only one region 4 is anti-competitive, and all DVD players sold here “should” be capable of playing DVDs from all regions. For a while, most DVD players were set up this way but this is by no means universal. The regions are as follows:

- REGION 1 -- USA, Canada
- REGION 2 -- Japan, Europe, South Africa, Middle East, Greenland
- REGION 3 -- S. Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Parts of South East Asia
- REGION 4 -- Australia, New Zealand, Latin America (including Mexico)
- REGION 5 -- Eastern Europe, Russia, India, Africa
- REGION 6 -- China
- REGION 7 -- Reserved for Unspecified Special Use
- REGION 8 -- Reserved for Cruise Ships, Airlines, etc...
- REGION 0 or REGION ALL -- Discs are uncoded and can be played Worldwide.

In addition to the above, PAL discs must be played in a PAL-compatible unit and NTSC discs must be played in an NTSC-compatible unit. The latter may require a NTSC to PAL signal conversion if the projection equipment is designed for a PAL signal input. However most TVs around today can handle either.

Each DVD has its region indicated on the back cover as a number in a circle or oval. The FVFS recommends that Film Societies generally buy DVDs of region 4 or 0, because that way it is more certain that a distributor can be found to approach regarding screening rights.

Thankfully, most DVD players are already “Region free” when you buy them. Most others can be pre-set or converted to any region or to “All regions” or “Region free” by a menu selection, which is usually hidden and not intuitive.

For example the Liteon LVW5005 player is set up by the sequence ...

1. Enter set-up screen.
2. Move cursor to “Exit”
3. Using the remote, key in “2960”.
4. On the pop-up menu select “region free”.
5. Press “setup” to close the menu.

NOTE: Apparently the Panasonic, Sony, Toshiba and most JVC players cannot be made region free by a menu selection technique. Many SONY DVD players are supplied Region Free from the shop.

To find the required sequence for your player, I suggest you check the handbook (unlikely unless added as a separate sheet), ask at the shop where you purchased the equipment, ring the Australian distributor or search the internet. If you have access to the internet, the latter is probably the easiest and fastest. Try the manufacturers website, or, www.videohelp.com/dvdhacks.php and search for your make and model, or in Google, search for the make and model number of your player and region free, or “DVD regions”.

If there is no reference to your make or model in the above, your equipment may have been “re-badged”. Check the rear of the player for another label or name-plate with a different make or model number, and search using that.

Blu Ray DVDs and players are also regionally coded, but paradoxically use different regions. For information Google “Blu Ray Regional coding”
However, many Blu-Ray discs appear to be uncoded or All Region, so are not as big an issue.

Email queries to admin@fvfs.org.au