

TV crisis code in works

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A code of conduct for TV channels covering crisis situations will be drafted over the next three weeks, according to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), after coverage of the weekend's mass shooting in Nakhon Ratchasima was criticised for hampering the police.

The plan was unveiled after the NBTC held an urgent meeting with digital TV operators yesterday to discuss TV coverage of the deadly shooting.

The code of conduct will be drafted in cooperation with security agencies, police and the Department of Mental Health before going through a hearing process with TV operators, said Lt Gen Perapong Manakit, chairman of the NBTC subcommittee in charge of broadcast scheduling and content.

He said the new standards would be partly based on regulations in the United States, Germany and Great Britain.

Live TV coverage of violent events will not be banned, he said, but restrictions on broadcasters' behaviour will be ironed out during the discussion and study.

According to an NBTC source, three digital TV channels have been called in for talks with the NBTC on Feb 18 to explain coverage that risked compromising efforts to rescue victims trapped in Korat's Terminal 21 shopping mall. The source said the three stations are One (31), Thairath TV (32) and Amarin TV (34).

The law bans content that affects state security or public morality, with penalties ranging from warnings to licence revocation. Lt Gen Perapong said operators in this case could face a warning.