Flashing & Photosensitivity

What is it for?

High-energy videos with strobing effects or rapid transitions can be physically dangerous. For people with epilepsy, if content flashes more than three times per second, it can trigger seizures. For people with vestibular disorders (inner-ear balance issues), intense motion like fast spinning or "shaky cam" can cause instant dizziness, sickness, and vertigo.

How to support it

Safety is about moderation.

- Ensure nothing flashes more than three times in one second
- Avoid rapid spinning or intense zooming
- If a video must contain flashing (e.g. concert footage), add a static "Warning: Flashing images" cover slide so users can scroll past before it auto-plays
- Avoid autoplay on websites; let users choose to start the video manually

A lot of this is manual and relies on people adding warnings and making sure that content is safe for others before it’s shared. However, it's worth noting that social media feeds usually auto-play videos by default. The platform won't stop a dangerous video, so it is entirely up to the person posting to check that their content is safe before sharing.

Useful links

- Epilepsy Society - Photosensitive Epilepsy
- Designing Safer Web Animation For Motion Sensitivity