

CODE OF ETHICS

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that justice and good government require an informed public. The journalist's duty is to provide that information, accurately, fairly and fully. Responsible journalists from all media, including nontraditional providers of news to a broad audience, should strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Responsible journalists think ethically before acting, and make every effort to get the story right the first time. Integrity is the foundation of a journalist's credibility, and above all, responsible journalists must be accurate. The purpose of this code is to declare the Society's principles and standards and to encourage their use in the practice of journalism in any and all media.

Seek Truth

Journalists should be accurate, honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information. Journalists should:

Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Use primary sources to verify information before publishing when possible.

Gather and update information throughout the life of the news story to avoid error.

Pursue accuracy in reporting over speed of publication. Neither speed nor abbreviation formats excuse inaccuracy.

Put information into context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify information in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.

~~Aggressively gather and update information as a story unfolds and work to avoid error. Deliberate distortion and reporting unconfirmed rumors are never permissible.~~

~~Remember that neither speed nor brevity excuses inaccuracy or mitigates the damage of error.~~

~~Journalists, not sources, are responsible for the accuracy of stories. Verify information from sources before publishing. Information taken from other news sources should be independently verified.~~

~~Work to put every story in context. In promoting, previewing or reporting a story live, take care not to misrepresent or oversimplify it.~~

Clearly identify sources. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on source's identity, reliability and possible motives. to judge the reliability and motives of sources. Seek alternative sources before granting anonymity. Reveal

~~conditions attached to any promises made in exchange for information. Keep promises.~~

~~Seek sources whose views are seldom used. Official and unofficial sources can be equally valid.~~

Reserve anonymity for sources who could face danger, retribution or other harm for providing information. Consider alternatives in reporting before granting anonymity. Anonymity should not be granted merely as a license to criticize. Reveal conditions attached to promises made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

When possible and appropriate, provide access to original documents and other information sources.

Diligently seek subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to criticism and to allegations of wrongdoing.

~~Avoid publishing critical opinions by those seeking confidentiality.~~

~~Never alter or distort news images. Clearly label illustrations.~~

~~Avoid re-enactments or staged news events.~~

Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional, open methods will not yield vital information to the public.

Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless. Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek nontraditional sources whose voices are seldom heard.

Avoid stereotyping. Examine your own cultural values and avoid imposing those on others.

Support the open exchange of views in news stories and among news consumers.

Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be clearly labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.

Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two. Clearly label sponsored content.

Never deliberately distort information.

Label rumors as unconfirmed in the rare occasions it becomes necessary to report one.

Never alter or distort images. Clearly label illustrations and reenactments.

Never plagiarize. Disclose sources of information not independently verified.

~~Always attribute information not independently gathered.~~

~~Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience.~~

~~Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection. Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.~~

Minimize Harm

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance, irreverence or an invasive behavior.

~~Be sensitive when seeking or using information, interviews and images of people affected by tragedy or grief.~~ Consider the potential harm when seeking or using information, interviews and images of people affected by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects. Consider cultural differences in your approach and treatment.

~~Recognize the harm in using photos or information, including any photos and data from social media forums, for which the source~~

~~is unknown, or where there is uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the images or information.~~ Authenticate all photos, data or other information, including any gathered from social media forums, including those for which the source is unknown, or where there is uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the images or information.

Recognize that legal access to information differs from ethical justification to publish. Journalists should balance the importance of information and potential effects on subjects and the public before publication.

Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing private information.

~~Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity. Avoid following the lead of others who violate this tenet.~~ those who do.

Consider the implications of ~~Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects, criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges, and victims of sex crimes.~~ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of online publication. Provide updated and more complete information when appropriate.

Act Independently

A journalist's highest and primary obligation is to the public's right to know **serve the public**. Journalists should:

Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations that may conflict with an impartial approach to information-gathering **and may compromise integrity or damage credibility**.

Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for news or access.

Deny favored treatment to advertisers and donors, or any other special interests, and resist pressure to influence coverage, **in any way, even if such pressures come from inside the media organization**.

Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not. Distinguish news from advertising and marketing material. Shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.

~~Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.~~

Be Accountable

~~Journalists should be open in their actions and accept responsibility for them~~ take responsibility for their work and explain their decisions to their readers, listeners and audiences.

Journalists should:

Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.

~~Admit mistakes~~ Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly. Corrections and clarifications should be explained carefully and thoroughly and displayed with the same prominence as the original item.

~~Clarify and explain news coverage and encourage audiences choices made in reporting. Encourage with the public over~~ Explain to a civil dialogue about journalistic practices and news content.

Disclose sources of funding and relationships that might influence, or appear to influence, reporting involving both journalists and their sources.

Expose unethical conduct in journalism by their own news organizations and others.

Abide by the same high standards they expect of others—public
persons.