

# Seek Truth and Report It

**Ethical journalism** Journalists should be **accurate and** honest, fair. **Journalists should be honest** and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

**Take responsibility for** ~~Test the accuracy~~ **of their work.** **Verify** information **before its** release. **Use original sources whenever possible.** ~~from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.~~

**Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.**

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

**Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.**

**Be cautious when making promises, but keep the promises they make.**

Identify sources **clearly,** ~~whenever feasible.~~ The public is entitled to as much information as possible **to judge the reliability and motivation of** sources ~~on sources' reliability.~~

~~Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.~~

~~Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.~~

~~Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.~~

~~Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.~~

~~Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.~~

~~Always~~ **Question sources' motives before promising anonymity,** **reserving it for those who may face danger, retribution or other harm.** **Anonymity should not be granted merely as license to criticize. Pursue alternative sources before granting anonymity.** **Explain why anonymity was granted.** ~~Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.~~

Diligently seek out subjects of news coverage stories to allow give them the opportunity to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.

Avoid undercover or other surreptitious reporting methods of gathering information except when traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story

Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.

Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Provide access to source material when relevant and appropriate.

Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. boldly, Seek sources whose voices are seldom heard even when it is unpopular to do so.

Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.

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

Never deliberately distort fact or context, including visual news the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Clearly label montages and photo illustrations and re-enactments.

Never plagiarize. Always attribute.

## Minimize Harm

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

Journalists should:

Balance the public's need for information against any harm or discomfort it may cause. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance, irreverence or undue intrusiveness.

— Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special heightened sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.

Recognize that legal access to information differs from ethical justification to publish.

— Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.

— Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.

— Recognize Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing personal information, including that from social media. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.

— Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity or following the lead of those who do.

— Be cautious about Consider the implications of identifying juvenile suspects, or victims of sex crimes and criminal suspects before they are charged. Balance a suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to be informed.

Be cautious about reporting suicides that do not involve a public person or a public place.

— Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.

— 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 publication, especially online. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

## Act Independently

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to 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 avoid political and other outside activities that may conflict with an impartial approach to information gathering, compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for access to news. Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not.
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers and donors, or any other special interests, and resist pressure to influence news coverage, even if it comes from inside the media organization.
- Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two. Clearly label sponsored content.

## Be Accountable and Transparent

**Ethical** Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other. Should take responsibility for their work and explain their decisions to the public.

Journalists should:

— Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.

Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices and news content.

— Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.

Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.

— Admit Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently.

Corrections and clarifications should be explained carefully and thoroughly.

— Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media. conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.

— Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others, they expect of public persons.

Adhere to the values in this code in all interaction with the public.