



RTDNA Canada
Radio Television Digital News Association
Association de Radio, Télévision et Informations Numériques

Code of Journalistic Ethics

PREAMBLE

An informed public is vital to a democratic society. Canadian journalism's purpose is to serve the public interest.

It is our responsibility to act independently, to be fair and respectful, and to report the facts.

This Code of Ethics is based on more than a century of journalistic experience and represents our membership's guiding principles.

We welcome its adoption by all practicing journalists.

1. ACCURACY

We are committed to journalism in the public interest that is accurate and reliable. Journalists will strive to verify facts and put them in context.

- 1.1. We will attribute news sources on the record whenever possible. Sources will be kept confidential only when there is overriding public interest and when sources risk retribution or other serious harm.
- 1.2. Accuracy also requires us to update and correct news and information throughout the life cycle of a news story as we become aware of relevant and reliable information.
- 1.3. Errors and inaccuracy that affect the understanding of a news story will be unambiguously and promptly corrected.
- 1.4. The commitment to accuracy also applies to verifying third party or user-generated content.

2. FAIRNESS

We are committed to impartial, unbiased journalism that serves the public interest through the free and open exchange of ideas, and respects the diversity of society.

- 2.1. Journalists should be fair and balanced, and avoid allowing their personal biases to influence their reporting. News events and public issues may be analyzed and put into context, but commentary, opinion or editorializing must be kept distinct from regular news coverage.
- 2.2. We will clearly distinguish news content from advertising and other forms of sponsorship.
- 2.3. Race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age or mental or physical disabilities will only be reported when relevant to news coverage.
- 2.4. Journalists should be responsive to questions of fairness posed by the public.

3.0 INDEPENDENCE

Journalism's first obligation is to act in the public interest. We will resist any attempts at censorship or interference, direct or indirect, which would undermine the principle of editorial independence.

- 3.1. We will oppose any corporate, political or other attempts to influence our journalistic decisions.
- 3.2. We will pay our own way and not accept payments, gifts or favours in exchange for news coverage.
- 3.3. We will not pay subjects or sources that have a vested interest in a story. Commentators or contracted experts are exempted.

- 3.4. We will apply the same journalistic standards of fairness and balance when reporting news about owners. We will oppose attempts by owners, either directly or indirectly, to influence news coverage.

4. INTEGRITY

We will govern ourselves on and off the job in a manner that avoids conflict of interest, real or perceived. When conflicts are unavoidable, they should be disclosed.

- 4.1. We avoid deceiving the people we cover or misrepresenting ourselves in any way, unless it is clearly in the public interest.
- 4.2. We identify clearly any part of our news coverage which is rehearsed or recreated.
- 4.3. Never plagiarize. We give proper attribution to the research, words, ideas, images, sound and intellectual property of others.
- 4.4. We recognize that expressing personal opinions publicly or in social media can erode our ability to be perceived as fair and balanced in our news coverage. It affects our personal reputations and those of our news organizations.

5. RESPECT

Our conduct will be respectful, always taking into account editorial relevance and the public interest.

- 5.1. We will endeavor to respect the dignity of everyone, especially when news involves children and the vulnerable.
- 5.2. We will act with sensitivity and restraint when reporting on potentially dangerous situations and when using violent or graphic images and descriptions.
- 5.3. We will treat people with decency, courtesy and consideration and we will strive not to distort the character or importance of events by our presence.
- 5.4. We will avoid sensationalism.
- 5.5. We will not infringe on a person's privacy unless we believe there is overriding public interest.