



PROFESSIONALISM AND HONESTY IN THE NEWS MEDIA

Recognizing that newsgathering institutions have the trusted responsibility to create a fair, balanced, honest and accurate product that reflects not only the overall integrity of the collective services performed by employees who work for the news organization, but the integrity of the organization itself, The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America promotes these principles:

- ◆ Those who work for newsgathering institutions shall be guaranteed freedoms of speech, beliefs and association in their workplaces.
- ◆ Individuals who work for news organizations have the right to be treated fairly, equitably and professionally and to have their skills and judgment respected.
- ◆ News organizations shall provide all employees, whether editorial, technical or commercial, with the support, equipment and independence necessary for them to practice their crafts safely and professionally.
- ◆ News organizations shall adhere to the same high standards of fairness and integrity they demand of their employees. These employees have the right to expect that they will not be required to do anything illegal or unethical. Additionally, they have the right to refuse to perform any illegal or unethical function without fear of reprisal.

Newsroom Employees

- The goal of newsgathering institutions and the reporters, editors, photographers, audio, video, graphic and web professionals who work for them is to report the news in a truthful, accurate and impartial way in order to inform the public.
- Those who gather and present the news shall at all times strive for honesty, accuracy, fairness and balance in order to maintain their credibility as guardians of the public's right to know.
- They shall identify themselves and their organizations when dealing with sources of information, except when that information can be obtained only through undercover reporting or such identification would put them at risk
- Stories, photographs, audio recordings and video material shall not be altered so as to deliberately distort what was said or present a knowingly misleading version of an event.
- News organizations shall have clear guidelines for attribution of material, so their employees can present their work in a manner free of any taint of plagiarism.
- Newsgathering institutions and individuals who work for them share a duty to further the open exchange of ideas and information and protect freedom of expression, not just on behalf of those who own the media but for the benefit of all. They shall respect diversity, reflect it in hiring policies, stories and delivery of information, and guard against prejudice or discrimination.
- Those who gather and present the news and the organizations that employ them have a right and responsibility to protect the identity of confidential sources.
- Those who work for newsgathering institutions have a right to be treated fairly, equitably and professionally and to have their skills and judgment respected. In defending the public's right to know and right to freedom of expression, individuals must not be asked to sacrifice their own freedoms of expression, association or belief.
- Those responsible for gathering and presenting the news retain their rights to private lives free of restriction, provided there is no actual conflict with their ability to be trusted sources of information.
- It is the shared duty of newsgathering institutions and those who work for them to oppose any attempts to suppress news and prevent important stories from being told. No employee shall be disciplined for exposing such unethical conduct, regardless of the level at which it takes place.

Commercial/Business Employees

- The public has the right to expect that a news organization and its employees who provide any professional customer service shall never offer any form of benefit or service that could promote discrimination or prejudice.
- Individuals who work for news organizations shall retain their rights to private lives free of restriction.
- A news organization's customers shall be treated fairly and equitably in any business transaction, and these customers have a right to expect disclosure of any information that might affect the ability of the news organization or its individual representatives to do so.
- A news organization's customers and the public have the right to expect information concerning circulation figures or ratings of the news organization to be complete, true and accurate.
- A news organization's customers and the public have the right to expect that there will be no technical manipulation or altering of data provided to the Audit Bureau of Circulation and/or any recognized governing entity.
- The public has the right to expect newsgathering organizations, their sales staff and other professionals to work together to meet particular needs or complaints in advertising, circulation and billing and to be the public's advocates in matters pertaining to use of the organization. To that end, these professionals have the right to defend their customers' legitimate interests to the organization without fear of reprisal.
- The public has the right to expect that a news organization and its employees will maintain and respect the clear line between advertising and news.
- The public has the right to expect that a news organization and its employees who provide any professional customer service recognize that they have an obligation to respect the confidentiality of any information obtained from their customers.